HUMAN
DEVELOPMENT

The Jesuit Educational
Center for Human Development

VOLUME FIVE

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Volume Five

The Editors and Editorial Board

PREFACE

The Music of Our Lives

Radio stations in cities all around the globe have recently discovered a formula that works. Aiming their programming especially at folks forty to seventy years old, they play the songs that revive long-cherished memories of favorite musicians, singers, films, Broadway musicals, and earlier-in-life events. These stations usually advertise their around-the-clock offerings under a title such as "The Music of Your Life." Apparently, their selections are rekindling more happy than distressful memories, since steadily increasing numbers of listeners are giving evidence of the appeal and success of these stations.

Generally, I suspect, most listeners take for granted the contributions of those who wrote, orchestrated, and sang the songs that have added beauty, pleasure, and joy to their lives. I doubt that many of us choose to think about time, hard work, self-discipline, and personal sacrifices that made possible the composition and performance of the melodies and lyrics we have loved to hear over and over again. Who considers what it cost Hoagy Carmichael to be able to write "Stardust" for us, what price Richard Rodgers paid to give us "Some Enchanted Evening," or what self-denial is hidden within Vernon Duke's haunting "April in Paris"? We hardly ask ourselves such questions. Consequently, it would be virtually impossible for us to experience fittingly profound gratitude and to express to such creative persons the well-deserved thanks that would be appreciated by them.

As we complete this fifth volume of HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, which contains all of the articles published in the four issues of our journal in 1984, I find myself thinking about the many woman and men—

lay, clerical, and religious—who have sat down, invested long hours, given up doing other things they would have enjoyed, and made the never-easy effort to write and rewrite the articles we are printing here. Their generosity in putting down on paper their laboriously thought-through ideas, in the hope that readers all over the world will benefit from their expertise and experience, certainly deserves to be appreciated. By sharing their insights with all of us who read these writings, they are adding new and enlivening themes to the background music of our lives.

The circulation of our quarterly journal has reached nearly 14,000 now, and copies are mailed to subscribers in almost 150 different countries all over the world. Our readers include church leaders, pastoral ministers, educators, religious superiors, spiritual directors, athletic coaches, religious formation personnel, campus ministers, missionaries, people performing healing ministries, parents, women and men engaged in lay ministry, and other persons of various religious denominations who have in their care people of all ages whose personal development they are striving to enhance. It is our hope that all of our readers, in whatever of these groups they are included, will find the articles in this current volume interesting, enjoyable, and useful. We present these writings with deep and continuing gratitude to those who have self-sacrificingly written them, to those whose readership makes the efforts of our authors worthwhile, and to the benefactors of the Jesuit Educational Center for Human Development, without whose moral and financial support our publishing ministry could not be kept alive and gradually expanded. We are grateful, too, to the God whose goodness, truth, and beauty become a little more clearly revealed through volumes like this one, which ought to be especially dedicated to him. Ultimately, it is he who continuously composes all the melodies and arranges all the harmonies that enrich our experience of life—particularly in that increasingly lovely score we can hear evolving within the maturing humanity of those persons we are helping to develop. They, even more than songs and symphonies, are his beautiful music constantly flooding into our fortunate lives.

James J. Gill, S.J., M.D.
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Advantages of Nineteenth Annotation Exercises

Helen M. Murphy, Ph.D.

The *Spiritual Exercises* were written by St. Ignatius more than four hundred years ago. Since that time they have been conducted in a variety of ways, including one-to-one and in groups. In some instances the director has given "points" (i.e., topics or themes) for meditation or contemplation in a short and concise form, thus facilitating many original, creative, and idiosyncratic experiences within the retreatant. In other instances the director has greatly expanded upon the points and consequently elicited more predictable and stereotyped responses in the retreatant.

An examination of the *Spiritual Exercises* suggests that they should ordinarily be given in a period of about thirty days. The material is subdivided into four weeks, although Ignatius makes it clear that the word "week" should not be interpreted too literally. The various sections can be shortened or lengthened in time and adjusted to the individual retreatant. Ignatius must have realized that there were and would be countless individuals who would be unable to get away from their ordinary occupation for a period of thirty days but who still had a great desire for surrendering themselves to God in the manner suggested in the *Spiritual Exercises*. Being convinced that his Exercises could help them attain this goal, Ignatius provided a means of performing them over an extended period of time. In his Nineteenth Annotation Ignatius states: "A person of education or ability who is taken up with public affairs or suitable business may take an hour and a half to exercise himself."

This article is concerned with the Nineteenth Annotation described by Ignatius. It assumes that the retreat is given on a one-to-one basis over a period of several months. It further expects that the retreatant will spend about one and a half hours in meditation or contemplation each day and meet with the director about once a week. I will not discuss the "At Home Retreats" (described by Mary Sullivan and Dorothy Horstman in *The Best of the Review*) given by a team, requiring group meetings once a week and prayer periods of fifteen minutes per day. Sullivan and Horstman considered these retreats to be of the Nineteenth Annotation type.

MULTIPLE BENEFITS

In my opinion there are several psychological and practical advantages of the Nineteenth Annotation style. Some of these are: (1) intense prayer becomes a part of each day's activities; (2) practical applications of the prayer are encountered almost immediately; (3) there is ample time to make the transition from one type of prayer to another; (4) the retreatant has the opportunity to experience many meaningful liturgies; and (5) the after-retreat letdown is not severe.

When a person spends one and a half hours in prayer each day for several months, the pattern of turning one's attention to God each day in a significant way becomes well ingrained into the person's lifestyle. The individual would feel empty and unfulfilled if the close relationship to the Lord were diminished. It is obvious that a large number of people will not be able to spend the same amount of time in prayer after the retreat has ended, but prayer will have become an integral part of their daily activity. Several times during the day one's

thoughts return to the material of the prayer period. The examination of conscience helps to keep a check on one's relationship to God and to others.

During a retreat, people often examine their lifestyle and attempt to find ways of changing it so that all their activities become directed to the greater honor and glory of God. In a closed retreat where retreatants are separated from their normal environment, their intentions may be somewhat abstract: "After the retreat, when I return to the office, I am going to be more patient with that person who really gets on my nerves" or "When I get back home I am going to listen to my spouse more attentively and not be so wrapped up in myself." In the Nineteenth Annotation retreat, one does not have to wait for a period of days or weeks to put intentions into action. Almost immediately, situations arise that test the proposed changes. There is ample opportunity to see if the changes are being made. If one experiences failure, he or she has the opportunity to talk it over with the Lord while still on retreat. For many individuals this "baptism by fire" is just the jolt that is needed to successfully bring about changes in a way of life. The person is not dealing with a theoretical situation in the future. The retreatant is dealing with the concrete now.

PRAYER STYLE VARIED

In the Spiritual Exercises, several forms of prayer are used during the different "weeks." In the first week, which stresses thinking and reasoning, meditation is employed. In the second week there is a shift to contemplation, with more emphasis on imagination. During the third week the contemplation differs in that the individual identifies more subjectively with the person of Christ than he or she did during the second week. Many people have difficulty making these transitions abruptly. The retreatant has to get a "feel" for the new mode of prayer. Dialogue with the director facilitates this process. By employing the Nineteenth Annotation approach, the retreatant is able to become gradually involved in and comfortable with each new method of prayer.

Daily Mass and the reception of the Eucharist are major sources of divine help for the retreatant. They make possible a special encounter with Christ that gives spiritual strength and psychological reinforcement to the person. With the retreat extended over several months, the retreatant has the opportunity to participate in many liturgies. Often, he or she will be exposed during these liturgies to material that previously served as subject matter in prayer periods. This experience can revive old thoughts and enrich the liturgical celebration. It may be possible to correlate different periods of the liturgical calendar with the specific parts of the Spiritual Exercises in which the retreatant is engaged at a particular time (e.g., part of the second week with Christmas or part of the third week with Holy Week). Participation in meaningful liturgies over a prolonged period of time can greatly enhance the prayer life of the individual.

It has been pointed out in the *Directory of the Spiritual Exercises* that "going out of retreat," especially a thirty-day retreat, is an experience of going from a warm to a cold place, emotionally speaking. While making the Exercises, one has felt God's presence in a significant way. This feeling leads the retreatant to make a commitment to bring about changes in his or her life. However, people have often reported that they experienced difficulty bringing their thoughts, words, and intended deeds out of retreat into everyday living. A serious attrition may result in relation to many of the benefits received during the retreat. This is most unfortunate, since the Spiritual Exercises are aimed at an entire lifetime and not just thirty days. As an antidote, the Nineteenth Annotation mode significantly decreases the shock of going out of retreat. The thoughts, words, and intended deeds developed within the context of prayer are of one's everyday life and thus have a very good chance of being brought to fruition. Attrition can be significantly attenuated, since the end of retreat brings about little change in the person's life situations.

It is important, however, to face the disadvantages and frustrations that may be encountered by the retreatant using this method. A person undertaking this form of retreat will usually need to be patient and persevering. The prayer periods occupy a great deal of time each day over a long session, so the retreatant will not have as much free time as before. In addition, the distractions of everyday living may serve as obstacles to fruitful prayer, and the retreatant may have difficulty overcoming them.

The Nineteenth Annotation retreat can be a very effective means of movement toward a personal commitment to Christ. Through this experience, the retreatant can truly become, in the words of Ignatius, a "contemplative in action."

RECOMMENDED READING

Cowan, M. and J. C. Futrell. *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola: A Handbook for Directors.* New York: Le Jacq Publishing Inc., 1981.

Fleming, D. L., *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius: A Literal Translation and a Contemporary Reading.* St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1978.

Sullivan, M. and D. Horstman. "The Nineteenth Annotation Retreat: The Retreat of the Future?" In *The Best of the Review: Notes on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola,* edited by D. L. Fleming. St. Louis: Review for Religious, 1981.

THE MINISTRY OF REFERRAL

James R. Zullo, F.S.C., Ph.D.

In our ministries of leadership within the church, we increasingly find ourselves needing to develop a larger repertoire of helping skills. Many of us have attended workshops and seminars on human relations skills for ministry—listening, responding, assertion, conflict resolution, and problem solving. In the contemporary world of religious life and priesthood, we are also experiencing a growing need to become more knowledgeable about and confident in making effective referrals to professional therapists in residential treatment centers. We recognize that this type of referral is almost always hard work, but it can succeed if handled skillfully.

Referral should be viewed as a special ministry within the context of the church's broader healing ministry, as an act of pastoral care within an expanded definition of caring. It is a type of caring that involves a healthy balance of affirmation and confrontation, blended with warmth and firmness. Being pastoral does not mean being passive or hand-holding; neither is it well exemplified by the image of a "hit man" wearing a roman collar. Caring, in its pastoral sense, implies helping others to grow beyond themselves and become the fully alive persons that they were created to be. Referral is fundamentally a call to life; it is participation in the life-affirming ministry of Jesus, whose message is "I have come that they may have life and have it more abundantly."

COMMUNITY ITSELF INSUFFICIENT

The ministry of referral highlights the group's genuine care for an individual by honestly acknowledging that it alone cannot give the specialized care and help that is required at this time. Rather than isolate the individual from the community, referral broadens and shares the group's responsible caring for the person. The charity of the community may be expressed in a variety of ways: it could be involved in the initial confrontation that facilitates the person's movement into treatment; it prays for, writes, calls, and visits its brother or sister who is receiving treatment; it stands compassionately ready to welcome the person back into the community after the treatment period has terminated. The congregation or diocese communicates that, even though a referral to a treatment facility will take place, the back-home community will remain the primary support group representing the Christian community in the life of the person.

This article addresses two groups of persons needing residential care: those suffering from alcoholism or other chemical dependency and those whose problems are primarily psychological. Referral of individuals involving alcoholism and chemical dependency will necessarily demand different management from that of referral of persons suffering from, for example, a long history of manic-depressive illness. What follows, then, is a discussion of the "referral network" and its three major components: (1) the person referred, (2) the referral source, and (3) the place of referral.

REFERRAL NETWORK DESCRIBED

The referral network can be imagined as a triangle, with one of the three major components at each point.
Each of these components will be examined individually. There will also be several examples of the ways in which they may interact with each other in order to facilitate the best possible care for the person being referred.

THE PERSON REFERRED

The person being referred for inpatient treatment could be any priest, sister, or brother whose

personal or professional functioning has been seriously impaired by alcoholism or some other chemical dependency or by psychological distress. In many instances individuals will require immediate referral because they are in serious danger of hurting themselves or others. A few examples will be helpful.

A priest is suffering from chronic depression but has generally been able to function well within the expectations of his ministry or community. Now, however, because of a serious physical illness, his depression deepens and he becomes emotionally paralyzed. He cannot carry on his daily activities; he sleeps eighteen hours a day; he is not eating properly and, as a result, is losing weight. He has also considered and talked about suicide. This man clearly needs to be in a treatment facility where he will get the help he needs and where he will not be a danger to himself. He needs the safe surroundings of a carefully supervised milieu to assist him in regaining a sense of self-mastery and self-esteem. In this case, the suicidal preoccupation and the other symptoms of serious depression constitute a cry for help. The man is telling others, through his suicidal talk, that he is afraid of losing control of his impulses and that he needs others to act on his behalf because he is not himself. In a sense, he is "beside himself" as a result of his depression—as if he were standing outside of his own skin looking at himself. This situation demands prompt, deliberate intervention primarily because the person is in immediate danger to himself; secondarily, he now needs the comprehensive care of a residential center to help him successfully terminate this episode of paralyzing depression.

Another example would be a situation involving a sister who has been known by her religious community to have a drinking problem that has been going on for several years. Many of her sisters believe that she is suffering from serious alcoholism. Her daily behavioral patterns are becoming more erratic and more noticeably affected by her drinking. She has experienced occasions of blacking out (i.e., not being able later to recall events in which she took part), and her consumption of alcohol has been steadily increasing. However, she holds firm to her belief that she is not an alcoholic and judges others to be overreacting. Efforts to get her to attend local Alcoholics Anonymous meetings have failed. (Had she gone to a meeting or two, she might well have returned home with the comment, "There's no way I can identify with those people.") Strong denial of her problem and a resistance to seeking any professional help continue. It is clear that this woman is becoming more significantly affected by her abuse of alcohol, and without proper treatment she will steadily deteriorate. It is the judgment of her congregation's leadership and of the professionals who have been consulted on the case that the present state of the

THE REFERRAL NETWORK

Person Referred

Referral Source   Place of Referral
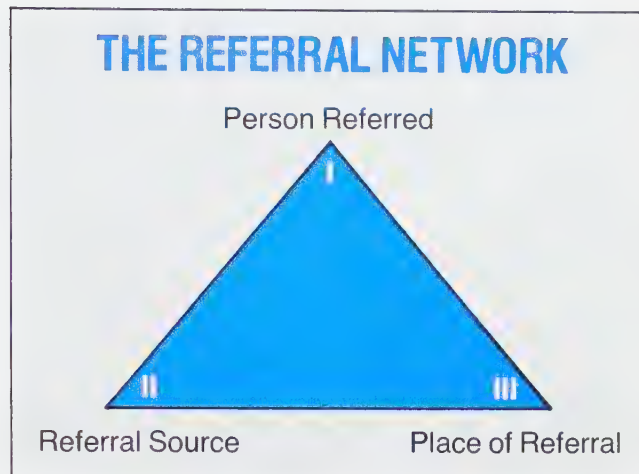
sister's alcoholism is serious enough to warrant inpatient treatment.

Proper Diagnosis Essential. In every case, it is necessary to diagnose an individual's present level of distress against the backdrop of his or her personal life history in relation to the problem being experienced. For example, a person's alcoholism may be associated with a particular developmental crisis in his or her life cycle. Consider a midlife religious brother, for instance, who has had no difficulty with alcohol in the past but increases his consumption of alcohol while locked in a stressful job situation. Because of midlife hormonal imbalances in his body chemistry and the various psychological stresses associated with his particular developmental stage, the consequences of alcohol abuse may emerge more rapidly for him.

In some cases, a person's problem will be acute; that is, the onset is recent and may be related to a particularly stressful life event. For example, a missionary priest may return to his homeland after several years away and experience a severe episode of disorientation and anxiety. Depending on his physical stamina and level of psychological adaptability, he may not negotiate this transition successfully. He could find himself on the verge of a breakdown and require a period of institutional care to regain a sense of emotional stability and confidence.

Other cases requiring hospitalization involve chronic problems that have an ongoing or fixed quality about them and are deeply rooted in the person's life history. Unlike acute problems, which are usually associated with particular life events, chronic difficulties reveal life patterns characterized by conflict. Long-term histories of alcoholism or chemical dependence and personality or affective disorders belong in this latter category.

Of course, the problem is exacerbated when a person with a history of chronic alcoholism or depression is beset with an "unscheduled" life crisis, such as a bout with cancer or a physical disability resulting from an automobile accident. In

this situation, the acute problem is superimposed on a chronic pattern of personal conflict, and the person's susceptibility to internal distress is considerably heightened. This type of person may choose to quell the intensity of his or her anxiety with alcohol or other chemicals. Doing so only accelerates the process because, although it may give temporary relief, it leaves the individual in a state of greater personal isolation and anxiety when its effects wear off. This creates a vicious circle, and the only way to break out of the circle is through appropriate therapy.

Steps Toward Referral. In dealing with the individual who is a candidate for referral, it is useful to assess the person's attitude toward referral. It is often helpful to mentally rehearse the scene of making the referral. How will it be heard? What will be the reaction? What is the likely outcome? A few matters need to be considered while reflecting on these questions. First, the person's readiness for referral must be assessed. This means estimating how open he or she is to hearing the idea of referral. Does the person feel the referral is necessary? Will the intervention be considered an overreaction on the part of the bishop or religious superior? Is the person hurting enough to benefit from a referral? For the most part, readiness for referral comes gradually—unless, of course, referral is a matter of great urgency as in the situation of someone making serious suicidal threats. The more chronic type of cases require that individuals be prepared over a period of time.

Second, the person's level of resistance should be considered. In cases of alcoholism or drug dependency, there is usually strong resistance to treatment. Patterns of reluctance may differ among persons who present themselves with psychological problems. It is important to view hesitancy in terms that are not totally negative. For example, the strength that supports a person's opposition to treatment comes from the same source that provides the strength he or she applies toward rehabilitation during treatment. In other words, resistance is often a good indicator of ego strength. In cases where resistance to treatment is strong, the probability of improvement is actually higher. People with little resistance (only slight ambivalence) are usually considered to be poorer prospects for being helped because their ego strength is low. As a result, their prognosis is more guarded (i.e., uncertain).

Third, it is useful to reflect on how the referral will be interpreted. Will the person view it as a form of punishment by the bishop or a rejection by the congregation? ("Do they want to get rid of me because I am a problem?") In the thinking of alcoholics especially, the paranoid process (i.e., the state of extreme suspicion and guardedness) is often highly developed. As a result, persons working with alcoholics can expect them to strike back with a variety of reasons why they should not be considered alcoholic and to come up with charges amounting to "you are out to get me." Moreover, because addictions distort judgment and perception, there will be a tendency to blame sources outside themselves for their problem. Some, for example, will believe their "terrible job situation" is compelling them to drink alcohol or take tranquilizers.
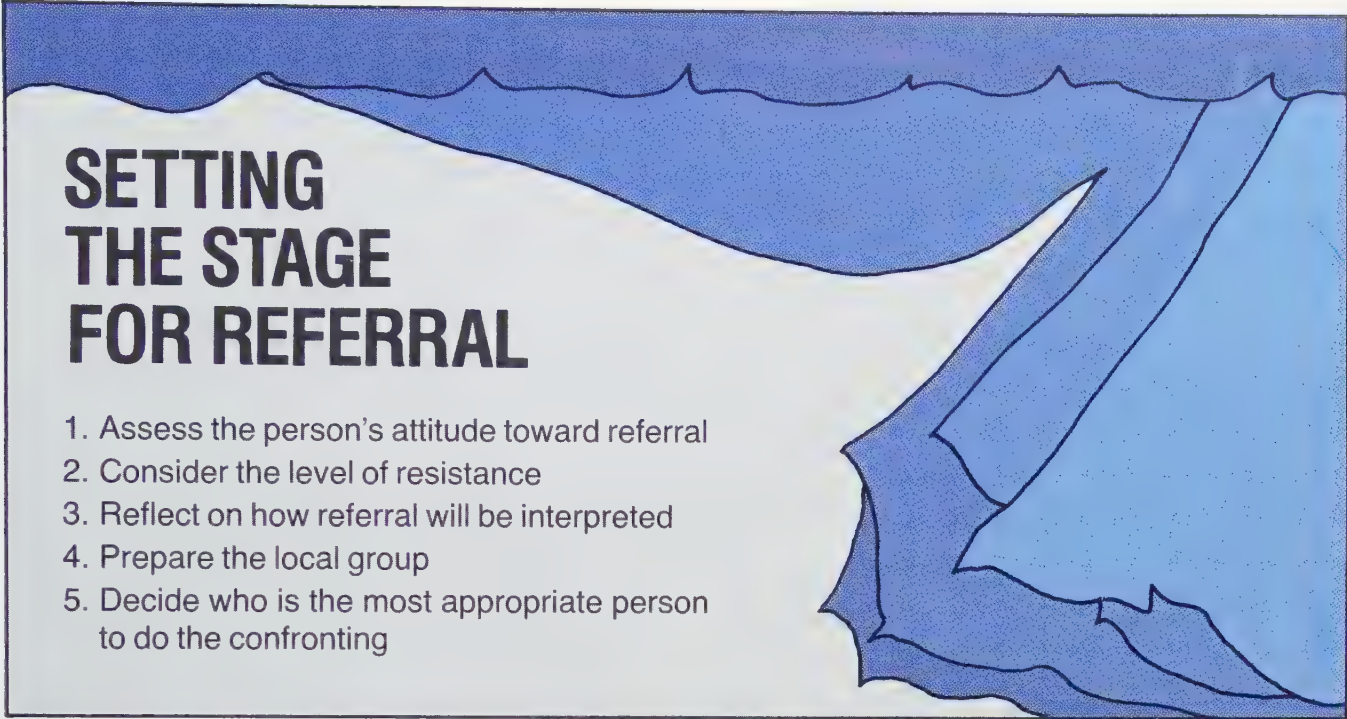
Ultimately, any talk of referral is threatening to such individuals because it suggests that the source of their problems is inside themselves. Whether those problems are physical, psychological, or both, the focus will be on what is happening inside their bodies and in their emotional lives. Referral forces people to examine their interior lives; it is frightening, and sometimes terrifying, because it implies that only they themselves can bring about change, and that will involve painfully hard work.

THE REFERRAL SOURCE

The person making the referral may be a major superior, a bishop, a personnel director, a local superior, an employer, or a good friend. On some occasions, the referral source will be the local community or rectory personnel, and their role will depend largely on their relationship to the person being referred and vice versa. For example, in a small religious community of four or five members, the group may take a more active role in getting the person ready for an eventual referral to a treatment center. The community may decide that it will not ignore the facts around a person's drinking and may choose not to make the person too comfortable or to alleviate problems that result from bouts of drinking. This means the community may deliberately leave a priest sprawled out on the floor of the T.V. room or a sister locked out of the house when she comes home drunk and cannot find her keys.

The relationship of the local community or rectory to the religious superior or personnel director needs to be clearly defined. The religious leader may want to be part of the community's effort to effect a referral for treatment of an individual. Preparing the members of the local group for the referral is essential, even if no one in the house is directly involved in the referral process. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways. For example, the professionals who will provide the treatment could come to the house, meet with the group (with or without the person being referred present), help them to examine and express their feelings about the referral, describe the treatment program, and explain how the group may become involved during the treatment period itself (e.g., through letter writing, phone calls, visits).

Qualified to Confront. But who is the most appropriate person in the congregation or diocese to un-

SETTING
THE STAGE
FOR REFERRAL

1. Assess the person's attitude toward referral
2. Consider the level of resistance
3. Reflect on how referral will be interpreted
4. Prepare the local group
5. Decide who is the most appropriate person
   to do the confronting

dertake the confrontation? To decide this, it is helpful to consider the history of previous relations with the individual, personality differences or clashes, age-related factors, and the skill of the person or group doing the confronting. Difficult cases involving alcoholism may necessitate using at least two persons in the initial confrontation. For example, the provincial and a good friend of a religious brother who is alcoholic may be paired in making the confrontation. Two persons, besides supporting each other and keeping perceptions and goals clear, are often able to diffuse the inevitable anger and resentment they will elicit from the alcoholic. In some dioceses, recovered priest-alcoholics, in groups of two or three, make the initial confrontation of an alcoholic priest.

Most basic in deciding who will make the referral is the quality of the relationship that exists between the person being referred for treatment and the person making the referral. The chance of a referral succeeding is enhanced when there is at least some semblance of a positive relationship between the two. In a sense, it is a matter of earning the right to refer. Referral will not succeed if it is made in hit-and-run fashion or if it strikes a person like a lightning bolt. Although referral is often an exercise in tough love, the one making the referral must truly care for this individual in a loving way, otherwise the referral will be doomed from the start.

Frequently, persons being referred cannot initially tolerate the idea of referral and so become hostile or withdrawn. In cases where a previous relationship exists, one can interpret the resistance and hostility as ways of testing the relationship. It

is as if persons want to know how much we really care, and they engage in this testing behavior to check that out for themselves. Such behavior emphasizes the importance for those making referrals of their working self-knowledge, including their reality-testing capacities, and their skills in making referrals for residential treatment.

Working Self-Knowledge. Making referrals for residential treatment unleashes a variety of feelings in each person who is involved. Under these circumstances the referral is much easier and much more likely to be successful if the referral source can anticipate and manage his or her own emotions. In this way, clear thinking and rationality can prevail over what can be a storm of feelings. The primary emotion involved is fear, often experienced in several ways. There can be a fear of shame, of exposing the individual in question and, by extension, of "hanging out dirty laundry" for the whole congregation or diocese to see. Fear of anger is also high on the list, not only the anger of the individual being referred but also the anger of the local community or the individual's family or friends. There is the fear of the guilt caused by the pain and distress of the person being referred. Guilt may be experienced because of uncertainty that referral is appropriate. When the referral source and the person being referred have a relationship, the referral source may fear loss of the relationship and thus may hesitate to follow through with the referral. Finally, there is invariably the fear of failure—that even though this person may be brought to a treatment facility, he or she may not be helped or may have a relapse after some time of stability or sobriety. These fears need to be faced

squarely. They are real, but they are manageable. Often, they are the reasons why nothing is done to confront persons who need to be referred for treatment.

When referral sources reflect on their own feelings, they may discover that along with the above-mentioned fears are omnipotent fantasies toward this person in need of referral or the person with problems in general. These are usually expressed through the feeling that "I can save him" or "I can help to heal her." It is not necessary to send this person for treatment because "we can help him within the context of our local community" or "there is a very empathic superior at that place." Often, bishops or provincial superiors believe they can help the alcoholic if they send him to a renewal program or clergy institute or, worse yet, if they send him on a long retreat. These decisions only reflect a denial of the real problem; there is a basic unwillingness to take the person's problem seriously. It is no wonder a religious resists any subsequent talk of referral. She has had her own personal denial reinforced by the denial of the religious leaders. In many of these cases, religious leaders view the need for referral as an admission of defeat.

A working self-knowledge is also imperative if the referral source is to avoid being manipulated or seduced. Most substance-dependent individuals are adept at manipulation. Such an individual may have influenced a provincial's previous efforts to effect a referral for residential treatment, and this could carry over as he or she prepares to make a new referral. People attempting referral are succumbing to manipulation or seduction if they agree to promises to stop drinking or give in to threats in the form of such statements as "taking me out of this community now will make me crack up" or "I will kill myself if you take me out of here." Persons in religious life or in the clergy can be particularly vulnerable to this type of manipulation, which induces guilt. Referrals are then not successfully completed, because those doing the referring have been manipulated into softening or changing their position concerning the need or importance of residential treatment. The tendency to back down or to accept the often persuasive argument that one is overreacting is frequently an expression of an unresolved need to be thought well of, to be approved of, and to be liked.

Because referral work is so emotionally demanding, it confronts the persons making referrals with both their blind spots and their strengths. For this reason, it is imperative for them to have access to professional consultants with whom they can reality-test their own perceptions, feelings, and strategies. Since most persons exercising religious leadership receive little formal training for their positions, they should find a trustworthy and competent psychologist, psychiatrist, or therapist who treats alcoholism with whom they can consult when necessary. No religious leader should expect to make referrals for residential treatment without a backup support system. The whole matter is far too delicate and stressful to be done alone.

Skills in Referring. In addition to becoming better at knowing both one's strengths and one's blind spots, it is important to develop three skills in particular that are integral to the process of making an effective referral—listening, confrontation, and assertion.

Listening skills. These are the most fundamental skills in any human relations and helping activities. Listening is not the same as passive receptivity; it involves skills of responding, initiating, and handling both inevitable silences that emerge and bursts of talking and questioning. Paraphrasing accurately, to reflect feelings and content, and leading the person to more significant levels of self-disclosure are important in listening effectively. Persons being referred are likely to experience embarrassment, fear, or rejection. Some of them will be able to articulate such feelings openly; others will reveal them only by their vague, nondescript manner of responding.

Listening should not evolve into an exercise of rescue or mutual commiseration; rather, skillful listening should enhance mutuality and foster greater autonomy. Active listening enables the person needing help to articulate more clearly and accurately his or her experience, to increasingly take ownership for decisions, and to explore further options and possibilities for change in behavior. Well-phrased questions will facilitate a person's efforts at self-exploration. Questions that elicit one-word responses are not helpful; questions need to be formulated so that they create an opportunity for more open-ended exploration and reflection. Of course, one must be prepared for those situations where even effective listening skills cannot remove highly defensive responses, i.e., responses heavily laden with denial or rationalization.

Confrontation skills. Confrontation is probably the most difficult aspect of making a referral for residential treatment. The most common reason for a poor confrontation is lack of confidence that the approach is correct. Further, many individuals feel uncertain about how to confront and even whether to confront because confrontation has suffered bad press. In the minds of many people, confrontation implies "letting her have it" or "cutting off his water." Confrontation has too often evoked images of flared tempers, angry outbursts, ultimatums, or "sweet-talking" manipulation. When done poorly, confronting an individual usually raises his or her defenses to such an extent that any open or mutual conversation is seriously impaired.

Three notions regarding confrontation need to be examined here. First, confrontation invites people to examine and explore their behavior to see how

it diminishes or limits their effectiveness. It is important to focus on behavior, on specific and concrete events, or on incidents or circumstances that are objectively describable. Confrontation does not work well when the primary focus is on motivational factors. To begin a confrontation with the statement "you've always had an authority problem in the congregation, and I think it is related to unresolved conflicts with your father" is unlikely to encourage openness and a letting down of defenses. One should stay with the objective facts and not give subjective evaluations of behavior. It is best to maintain an exploratory posture ("let's take a look at these facts") and to proceed gently but firmly.

Second, as mentioned earlier, a person has to earn the right to confront. Some kind of relationship has to have been established before the confrontation in order to provide a context of trust and care. This prior relationship in no way guarantees that there will be a "happy ending" to a confrontation, but it is basic to a good beginning. Although the relationship need not be one of close friendship, a history of some positive experiences together, at least, needs to exist. Of course, there are occasionally cases where no one in leadership in the congregation or diocese has a positive relationship with the individual. When this situation exists, the person who is most likely to succeed with this particular individual should do the confronting.

Third, it is critical that whoever does the confronting stay with the person throughout the process, since several confrontations may be required before a person accepts the idea of referral. (More often than not this is the case.) Persistence, firmness, and consistency, blended with a genuine attitude of caring, are essential ingredients for effecting a successful referral.

Assertion skills. These skills lead to an involvement with people being referred that does not foster dependence, but does enhance greater autonomy and their ownership of their lives. As soon as a religious leader realizes that he or she is dealing with needs in an individual that neither leader nor congregation can meet, it is helpful to explain this to the individual and to raise the probability of referral. It is important to give this feedback clearly and firmly. What is called for are honest and straightforward assessments that neither exaggerate nor minimize the situation. While offering the evaluation and mentioning the possibility of referral, it is crucial to spell out how the referral source will continue to be part of the referral network. In other words, the person is not being abandoned, given up, or rejected. To the contrary, the leader and the community are responding to the individual's needs by broadening the person's support base. It can be reassuring to know that the person making the referral, and perhaps the local community, will be involved before, during, and after the inpatient

In cases where resistance to treatment is strong, the probability of improvement is actually higher

treatment. Having a plan that emphasizes these continuing relationships reduces anxiety in the person making the referral, and it can reassure the person being referred that he or she is cared about. At times, persons may not hear the messages of care, because of their own deep sense of hurt and embarrassment. Nevertheless, this method communicates that the person who is the referral source has done his or her homework and is behaving as a reliable and trustworthy person.

Doing one's homework means that the religious leader or other helping person learns about the various facilities that treat religious and clergy and meets the professionals who administer them and work there. Having done this, the referral source can speak with some authority and confidence about the appropriateness of a particular treatment facility for this person, telling the individual what the program is like and what he or she will be permitted to do and not do, and can generally answer most questions that the person being referred may have.

Assertion skills involve the use of leverage, especially with alcoholics and chemically dependent persons. Highly resistant people need to be helped in spite of themselves. Whereas it is impossible to drag a person in chains to a treatment facility, certain assertive strategies on the part of superiors can be employed. Some congregations and dioceses have developed policies requiring that after a person has been given a specific period of time to think over the idea of referral, he or she must either accept treatment or take the consequences imposed by the authorities. In some instances, a congregation or diocese has refused to give the person an assignment to a particular parish, community, or apostolate, or it has cut off the person's financial support.

Whatever method of leverage is used, it must be taken seriously by the leadership and followed through. It cannot be an idle threat. Even though it may appear cruel, ugly, or uncharitable, leverage is often the only way to get a person to accept the

treatment that she or he so badly needs. Highly resistant persons possess considerable ego strength; the countervailing forces in their world (in this case, the religious leadership) must possess at least equal strength of resolve.

THE PLACE OF REFERRAL

The third component of the referral network includes the particular facility to which the person is being referred and the professionals (psychiatrists, psychologists, doctors, therapists treating alcoholism, social workers, etc.) who will be directly involved in his or her treatment. Fortunately, numerous treatment centers exist, including facilities specifically maintained for religious and clergy suffering from alcoholism, chemical dependency, or short- or long-term psychological problems. The National Association of Church Personnel Administrators has published the *Treatment Facility Resource Manual* (by Sister Mary Ann Barnhorn and Jane Gehring, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1983), which describes many of these centers and their programs. Persons making referrals should visit those places where the majority of their referrals will be going. During such visits aspects of the treatment plan can be discussed with the professionals involved. A religious leader can check out the credentials of the personnel and their experience and understanding in working with religious and priests, the type of treatment offered, insurance and other financial considerations, after-care, and follow-up procedures.

When religious leaders and/or community representatives work closely with the professionals of a treatment facility, several considerations need to be kept in mind. A major concern is clarification with professionals of how the referral sources will continue to be involved once the person enters the treatment facility. It is valuable to know the facility's policies regarding visits, letter writing, telephone calls, sessions involving religious leaders or representatives of the local community, and weekend visits home by the person in treatment. Defining the appropriate modes of involvement is important in building the credibility of the support network and giving it confidence.

Second, interaction of professionals with the local community, larger congregation, or diocese must be considered. Will professionals be asked to advise or counsel members of the local community or religious leaders before or during the treatment process? What about arrangements for reentry and aftercare? What is to be done when the plan calls for the use of a halfway house or hospice as part of the reentry process? What about the use of local A.A. meetings in the case of a returning alcoholic?

Third, it is essential to know something about the medications that a person who has been referred for psychological problems is taking, especially after returning from the treatment center. This information is ordinarily made available by professionals treating the person. What side effects can occur with the specific medications being prescribed? What are the brand names? What are the dosages? Are there certain foods or alcoholic beverages the person should avoid while taking a particular type of medication? It is wise for religious leaders to keep at hand a current copy of the *Physician's Desk Reference* (published by Medical Economics Company, Inc., Oradell, NJ 07649) in order to have ready access to information about the current medications being prescribed.

Fourth, treatment facility personnel will frequently be active partners in the plan for reentry and aftercare. The reentry process is often as critical a factor in the patient's care as is the treatment itself. When about to be released from a treatment center, the patient is given extensive help in handling the inevitable tensions that surround going home. It is also helpful to prepare the receiving community for the homecoming. Helping group members explore and express their feelings about the person's return helps alleviate the anxiety that is likely to develop. It is reassuring for a group to hear that they do not have to pretend that hospitalization did not happen, and that it is healthy and necessary to discuss it. The patient is usually ready and willing to talk about the experience, and this in itself constitutes an important aspect of the healing process. In summary, the primary role of the professional in reentry is to facilitate effective communication among all parties involved.

For their part, religious leaders need to keep in mind that the task of getting a person to a residential treatment center is often a long and complex one. It is important not to become overinvested in the person being referred or to take responsibility for the outcome too personally. To avoid discouragement, frustration, and fatigue in ministering to persons with serious problems it is important to be patient with oneself, to take the necessary time to develop an adequate backup support system, and to become more proficient in exercising the necessary skills and diagnostic sensitivities involved in the referral process. In this way, we enhance the quality of our compassion for our suffering brothers and sisters.

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MEGATRENDS
OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Joseph J. Hayden, S.J.

rom the exploration and colonization of North America to the exploration of outer space, our lifestyles have evolved from the independence of farming and cattle raising to the interdependence of urban living and working. Since work is so essential to the self-definitions of Americans, sweeping occupational shifts signal changes in the ways in which we relate to one another and to God. In that light, John Naisbitt's futuristic best seller, *Megatrends: Ten New Directions Transforming Our Lives,* is well worth our study, for it describes and predicts changes in employment that will have a strong impact on the ways in which we find God in our lives.

Megatrends traces our current transition from an emphasis upon manufactured goods to a focus upon information, as illustrated by instant communication via satellites, which Naisbitt considers the most important socioeconomic development of our time. Next in importance after satellites are computers and education, whose economic impact Naisbitt is at pains to stress.

In this article I begin where *Megatrends* ends, with the goal of looking more specifically at its implications for human development. Each of Naisbitt's directions or megatrends will be examined for its significance for those seeking an integration of their psychological and their spiritual development. Possible and actual responses of people of faith will be considered.

INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY TO INFORMATION SOCIETY

The transformation of our society from an industrial one based upon manufacturing into an information society based upon the creation and distribution of information presents major problems of adjustment. For years we have been aware of the alienation of assembly-line workers from their products. Even though the division of tasks psychologically distances workers from their products, they nevertheless had some feeling of achievement, limited though it was, and acquired some sense of what psychoanalyst Erik Erikson calls generativity. Today, however, employment by American factories is declining because of such factors as automation and increased competition from imports, thereby depriving many workers of the positive contribution jobs make to their self-concepts. In the same vein, Pope John Paul II, in his encyclical *On Human Work,* declares work is of value for human beings because it connects workers with the world and helps them become more human. *Jobs and Justice,* the 1983 Labor Day Statement from the U.S. Catholic Conference, written by Bishop Mark J. Hurley, focuses specifically on the disruption of lives caused by the scientific and technological revolutions and issues a call to meet those challenges in order to promote justice in our society.

Even our religious institutions are shaken by the information explosion, which often places highly educated, competent professionals in parishes conducted by priests and ministers who find it difficult to understand them. Yet, if Lawrence Kohlberg's assertion that most adults function at a moral judgment stage characterized by conforming behavior is correct, churches must challenge the moral thinking of their parishioners to prepare them for lives in an information-based society and to avoid the moral atrophy exemplified by the authority-bound Nazi officers of the Holocaust. Providentially, research describes ministers and priests from mainstream churches such as the Roman Catholic as more advanced in moral judgment than the average person and thus well equipped to motivate parishioners toward reflective, responsible moral thinking.

FORCED TECHNOLOGY TO HIGH TECH/HIGH TOUCH

When high technology rules, high touch in the form of a more horizontal model of governance is essential. Most of us have observed the fascination of computer games, and many are familiar with the instant feedback and closure of computer work. Could that sense of closure and total involvement also create expectations for the social aspects of our lives that would intensify our desire to be more in touch, to have more meaningful relationships with human beings? If so, the high-tech qualities of our

lives could bring us toward more fully human relationships.

The Second Vatican Council made this direction explicit twenty years ago in its epochal *Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, in which it described the church as a people to whom God wishes to communicate his love. By declaring the loving relationship that God wishes to have with his people, the Council set a course parallel to that of Naisbitt's high-touch form of governance: it advocated active participation on the part of laity within the church, while at the same time reaffirming the principle of apostolic succession.

A deliberate follow-up to those efforts at reform and renewal is the new *Code of Canon Law*, which provides for pastoral councils chosen to represent all the constituencies of a diocese on a consulting basis. Canons 511–514 thereby recognize the value of diverse input into decision making and may give bishops more varied social contexts within which to continue their emotional and spiritual development.

FROM NATIONAL ECONOMY TO WORLD ECONOMY

With instant satellite communication has come the end of isolationism as a viable foreign policy and as a means of retaining America's position as an industrial giant. The mobility of the American family and its frequent separation from the previous generation have decreased the cultural support provided by traditional values. No longer can we take our values for granted and expect our next-door neighbor to agree with our ways of doing things; nor can keeping our emotional distance resolve these differences.

As Americans have acquired more knowledge and experience of people of other religions, they have faced questions about their own faiths and have found it difficult to reject other creeds. Ecumenical efforts such as the Church Unity Octave and Vatican II's *Decree on Ecumenism* have also led to a deeper understanding and appreciation of other religions, and many joint studies have been launched to investigate similarities and differences. Within the Catholic Church, religious orders and communities have abandoned some of their isolation by establishing relations with each other in groups such as the Leadership Conference of Women Religious.

FROM SHORT-TERM PLANNING TO LONG-TERM PLANNING

The continuing changes in the world make more long-term planning necessary. The advent of electronic funds transfer, through which money can change hands instantly, allows us to see the impact of our actions immediately and underscores the need for prudent planning. Industrial advances resulting in the pollution of air and water have proved to be short-term gains with long-term losses.

Churches and religious communities are doing more organizational planning with the aim of clarifying goals of worship, service, and community while reflecting upon their particular charisms in the context of the modern world. Most religious communities have diversified their apostolates; many have become more involved in pastoral and social ministries. Efforts to promote justice have included direct social work and education, pastoral letters and legislative lobbying, and encouragement of corporate responsibility in the selection of investments. Religious leaders, including the American bishops, have taken firm positions on racial justice and on war and peace, thereby evidencing their participation in planning for the future of the world and its people.

CENTRALIZATION TO DECENTRALIZATION

There is a growing trend away from action from the top down (centralization) and toward action from the bottom up (decentralization). Naisbitt explains today's lack of strong leaders by asserting that they are simply not thought necessary, and consequently followers ignore the efforts of would-be leaders to set directions. Instead of a few major leaders, many small groups are arising with leaders nearer at hand. As an example, Naisbitt notes that in America only the grassroots religions are experiencing growth.

Within the Catholic Church, part of the reason why movements such as Cursillo, Marriage Encounter, and the Charismatic Renewal are so successful may be that they offer more people the chance to be leaders. Many religious communities have reorganized into smaller groups in which responsibility is more evenly shared and decisions are made jointly. A welcome side effect of this new participation is that it challenges religious to take more responsibility for their own lives.

Following the encouragement of the Second Vatican Council with its stress upon collegiality, parish councils are taking on more of the planning and administration, thereby freeing priests for more directly pastoral work. The modification of priests' self-concepts along these lines will require considerable flexibility; many are likely to benefit from management training and spiritual direction designed to help them organize groups and to commend the discernment of spirits as the basis for decision making within the context of faith.

INSTITUTIONAL HELP TO SELF-HELP

We are coming to depend less on institutions for help and more on ourselves. Hospices for terminally ill patients are an example of this change:

many people choose not to become heavily involved with hospitals, preferring instead to have the dying remain at home or in a homelike environment, when possible. Alternative birth methods, jogging, and preventive health through exercise and diet are examples of ways in which Americans are taking more responsibility for their own health. Growing distrust in the government's ability to educate is accompanied by increased confidence in private and religious schools. The Christian Family Movement, as an example of the successful involvement of a large institution, i.e., the Catholic Church, in a program in which families support one another, suggests a possible direction and format for church activities of the future.

REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY TO PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

As a result of the instant communication that is possible today, representative democracy is giving way to more direct participatory governance in all endeavors. This direction is another expression of people's desire to be consulted about decisions affecting them and to originate their own activities. The current interest in personal prayer makes Naisbitt's stress upon direct participation relevant to the spiritual development of many adults as well. Certainly Vatican II's affirmation of the lay state as a genuine vocation has not fallen upon deaf ears. Rather, parishioners with appetites whetted by meaningful liturgies, retreats, and catechetics are zealously seeking deeper spiritualities. Furthermore, the *Constitution on the Church* asserts the interdependence of priests, bishops, and laity; though these relationships can still be improved, the extent of the changes already achieved in some places approaches the miraculous.

HIERARCHIES TO NETWORKING

We are moving from hierarchic structures toward networking, which is less formal but more all-embracing. Although the government of hierarchical churches has not been altered suddenly, in some cases, as in the Catholic Church, the hierarchy itself has initiated change by calling upon the laity to share ecclesial responsibilities. Psychologically, this increasing dependence upon the people in the pews is promoting the faster information flow that Naisbitt advocates, at a time when rapid change necessitates prompt response and adaptation. Moreover, the spread of education from the clergy to the laity has meant that there are more parishioners who are the academic equals of the clergy; as a result, there is a better chance of building relationships that are emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually satisfying. This wide-based networking encourages participation by today's technocrats and technicians in a caring,

No longer can we take our values for granted and expect our next-door neighbor to agree with our ways of doing things

Christian community and increases the likelihood of apostolic action.

Networks created to solve problems that hierarchies alone could not solve allow people with similar values to support one another in simple but effective ways. Just as religious denominations, once in competition, now cooperate with one another, so religious communities, formerly isolated from one another, have begun sharing their members with each other so as to use their special talents and training more fully. Indeed, traditional structures have not died—they have been strengthened by the vast resources discovered through the informal relationships of networking.

NORTH TO SOUTH

The large-scale movement of people from north to south is occasioned more by the establishment of new information businesses than by the moves of manufacturers. The church is concerned with this direction in a reactive way, for it must consider how to serve Catholics in newly developed sections as well as those in declining urban areas. What is required is a sense of the universal church and the opportunity to rediscover the true nature of church as seeking to bring God's love to all people, as Vatican II declared in its *Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church*. We must reconsider our priorities as we face the necessity for church personnel to be uprooted and moved to where they are needed. The psychological adjustment required of these ''missionaries'' will challenge their social skills when they find they need new support communities.

EITHER/OR TO MULTIPLE OPTIONS

Our modern society is changing from one that poses polar either/or choices to one that offers the individual many options. The most obvious example of what Naisbitt calls the option explosion is the popularity of dual careers among women: more women are building careers in the professions and business, and many are choosing to have children later in life. A related development is the increasing role of fathers in childrearing with all

the advantages and differences that a second major caregiver can make to the development of tomorrow's believers.

SOME HAVE ADVANTAGE

As we move into an era in which our self-esteem can no longer depend upon tangible, finished products, faith will be an essential support for the truly integrated person. In some ways, persons directly serving the church are better prepared for the megatrends than the average person, because they have not been employed by industry but rather have been working in service-related occupations that can be more easily integrated into an information society. Furthermore, if they have been active in the Roman Catholic Church during the past twenty years, they already have experienced major changes.

Religious are even more intensively prepared for the future as described by Naisbitt, for their vows of obedience have kept them in a state of readiness for changes of home and job. Vows of poverty have fostered detachment, so that religious are more able and willing to accept jobs with lower salary or prestige, or even to work without salary while being supported by other community members. Similarly, celibacy makes adaptation easier by encouraging the individual to remain open to new relationships. Indeed, for the religious dreamer, the changes promised by *Megatrends* offers the excitement and challenge of learning new skills, getting to know new people, and finding God in everything new. If *Megatrends* is correct, the best is yet to come for the committed believer.

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Growth And Religious Diversity

Robert J. Willis, Ph.D.

A Theory of Interpersonal Development

Since the Second Vatican Council, the American Catholic Church has been swept up in a tide of change. Religious practice once noted for its regularity, proclaimed for its unity, and exemplary in its conformity to ecclesiastical authority now appears to many people chaotic. Irregularity, diversity, and personal expression seem to be the new law. The church is not, and likely never will be, the same: priest synods assist bishops and lay councils advise pastors; extraordinary ministers assume functions once reserved to priests; English masses, guitar masses, and children's masses bloom where the nearly vanished high and low Latin masses once flourished in solitary splendor. The rosary and novenas must now compete with breathing prayer,

healing prayer, and Jesus prayer. Even ecclesiastical authority with its once monolithic hold on the Catholic conscience now shares its influence with a growing lay authority and responsibility.

If the resulting anxieties experienced by many are to be transformed into fruitful confusion, and confusion into creative confidence, then Catholics must be helped to find freedom in the present diversity, to recognize the unity underlying and supporting a multitude of differences. Such an understanding will not remove the differences but may transform them from signs of despair into symbols of hope. It may also highlight the essentials of our faith that still are and promise ever to be the same.

The unity is there. It lies not only in the once revealed; it encompasses an ongoing revelation in the predictable patterns of modern human life, growth, and development. In a community less hemmed in by external constraints, that life—both individual and communal—has become freer to follow its own inner urges and to seek its own unfolding. Yet unless we understand the direction and stages of that unfolding of life as part of God's providential plan, the released energy can only seem a license for self-destruction rather than creation's law for humanity's realization.

With the hope that I can contribute to such an understanding, I will be presenting in this article a theory of relational development. Six life stages, including four areas within each of these, will be developed. As each of the stages becomes clear, the four areas within them—interpersonal life, moral judgment, community forms, prayer and ritual—

will certainly be seen to differ, but according to the intrinsic necessity of each life stage. And as stage gives way to stage, so will religious forms be understood as inevitably changing according to the movement of human life from uniformity to diversity to unity in diversity.

STAGE I: EXTRINSIC EVALUATION

Interpersonal Development. From their earliest encounters with a threatening world, children learn to gain strength by identification ("My dad is bigger than your dad"), control by refusal ("I'm going to take my ball and go home"), and importance by possession ("They are *all* mine"). When one is little, at the mercy of others, and relatively unimportant, such strategic ploys make immediate psychological sense. If identity within cannot yet provide security and meaning, then searching for extrinsic ways to be a someone appears both necessary and very reasonable.

Young children, unfortunately, do not stand alone in this search. Psychological children of all ages look to external standards and apply them as the measure of their personal worth ("My life is really worthwhile now that I have a Ph.D. and a $100,000 home and have been selected as Director of Nursing"). Such people live and die as they meet or fail to meet society's standards of meaning or excellence. Far too many students throughout the world move from disappointment to depression and even to suicide because they cannot get into a certain college, have failed to pass an important exam, or have not received the expected grade. Too many men and women rapidly become old, ill, and die when they retire or when children leave home, because they are losing the roles that gave their life meaning.

Extrinsic evaluation works only as long as one performs as a "front runner." Should one fall back, even through the inevitability of the aging process, not only is the race lost, one also vanishes into the emptiness of being a nobody with no identity to call one's own.

Moral Development. Living in this psychological stage means conformity to "the law" set down by any source of authority—civil, religious, or familial. These laws give direction to one's life and offer the assurance of moral rectitude. Individual conscience represents, in the lives of people living at this stage, the sum total of laws and norms, regulations and rules that they as Catholics must follow if they are to measure up to their Christian duty. Intelligent assimilation, humble acceptance, and careful attention to every detail are considered the means of "being a good Catholic." Their tendency to absolutize the relative and to universalize the particular extinguishes most urges toward and necessity for individual decisions suitable to specific situations. The excited "do it again" of the child changes only slightly into the secure repetition of the tried and true that is forever safe and right.

Community Development. Essential to this stage is the knowledge that "we belong to the one, true church." The community of believers lives securely as God's chosen people, a sign to the pagans of the divine offer of salvation. Their common expressions of religious concern revolve around "witnessing," "converting," "preserving the faith," "standing up for one's beliefs," and "condemning heretics and unbelievers." These members consider themselves to be the community of the saved whose primary function is to challenge others to choose the narrow way of God's will for humanity in and through his church.

THE PROCESS OF GROWTH AND RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY				
	Interpersonal Development	Moral Development	Community Development	Prayer and Ritual Development
Stage I	Extrinsic Evaluation	Duty Law	Perfection	Meditative Fixed
Stage II	Mutual Dependency	Responsibility Command	Obedience	In common/ verbal Adjusted
Stage III	Shared Independency	Situational appropriateness	Measurement	Listening Conditional
Stage IV	Shared Interdependency	Presence Humility	Self-centeredness	Inspired
Stage V	Contemplative Incorporation	Integration	Discovery Being taken	Hospitality Active reception
Stage VI	Contemplative Expression	Existence	Love Unity	Revelation Service

Prayer and Ritual Development. In the area of religious practice, applying extrinsic measures leads worshippers to sit or stand, pray aloud or keep quiet, bow their heads or sign themselves precisely as directed. No questions are allowed; indeed, they may earn the angry accusation of disloyalty or even sin. Exactness and attention to detail generate behaviors as normal as the orderly filing up to receive communion or as neurotic as anxious efforts to make a perfect genuflection or compulsive repetition of designated prayers.

Quite understandably, prayer, at least in most Western cultures, becomes at this stage of growth "the saying of prayers." The preference is for official prayer (attending Mass), fixed prayer (reading the Psalms), and rational prayer ("making my meditation"). "Purity of intention" and "meeting my religious obligations" too often in Roman Catholicism fulfill the meaning of prayer and stake out the essential boundaries of one's spiritual life.

STAGE II: MUTUAL DEPENDENCY

Interpersonal Development. In Western society, this stage usually appears in early grade school years and may extend through high school. Age, growing social contacts, increased mobility, and burgeoning activities serve to shift childish dependency from parental approval to acceptance by "the other kids."

During these years the group becomes the measure of being, and inclusion the standard of meaning. Little girls and boys yearn for membership in school clubs and recognition on school teams. They desire nothing less than the class presidency or team captaincy. Nothing devastates them more than exclusion from "the gang." Popularity within the peer group is all important.

If my identity is not mine, during this stage I will find it only through a dependent relationship. Accepted, I will appear secure, loving, and "a someone." In reality, this love is need, security is dependency, and "a someone" is a ghostly illusion fading and reviving among the vagaries of others' acceptance.

As in the previous stage, childish dependency may substitute for identity throughout adult life. Where "keeping up with the Joneses" previously (in the first stage) satisfied, now being invited to join their party of select friends alone suffices. Having the money to take exotic vacations once meant "I've made it"; but now jet-setting must include the elite with whom you are traveling and are identified. Where being a lawyer once sufficed, now being a member of *the* firm is required.

Common to this stage are exclusive and excluding relationships. Identity comes not only from relating to *the* person or group but also from being the favored one of that person or group. To be included means to hold a secure place, one that must

be protected from all outsiders. Indeed, relationships that fashion high walls and dig formidable moats around "the insiders," that emphasize the difference between them and "the outsiders," clearly signal this stage of interpersonal development.

Many supposedly adult relationships ape the intimacy rituals of juveniles in word ("I'm no one without you"), in feeling (jealousy), in manipulation and control ("you may think of, look at, go out with, and share with me alone"), and in identification ("I love you because I need you for me to be a person.").

Moral Development. Moral rectitude in this second stage consists in aligning oneself with the expectations of the person or group with which one finds identity. Obedience to an objective law gives way to the responsible carrying out of the accepted norms and commands of those authorized to speak for the relationship or group. Rectitude becomes acceptability, conformity acceptance, and objective truth subjective inclusion. One need only recall the My Lai massacre and the insistent argument that "I was only doing what was expected of me" to recognize the great possibility for evil in this stage of morality.

Community Development. The measure of community, in this stage, is whether the community thinks and speaks as one. Religious groups typically indoctrinate newcomers into their way of life by isolating them for long periods from all outsiders and allowing only those insiders most identified with the group to remake them in their own image and likeness. Isolation, restriction of visitors, and censorship keep the outside world from intruding. Preaching of doctrine, setting of relational standards, rewarding conformity, and proscribing individuality serve to underline for the aspiring novice the ultimate, almost absolute importance of conforming to the group's norms and behaviors. Identifiable uniforms, emphasis on loyalty, presentation of a united front, and the requirement of seeking authoritative permissions all give evidence of the value of uniformity.

Prayer and Ritual. As might be expected, religious practice becomes essentially communal. Members eat together, sing together, recreate together, worship together. Above all, presence at group activities is demanded. The prayer itself, although sometimes silently meditative, is often done in common and always leads to some verbal prayer offered in the group's name. The use of the prescribed prayer time for private prayer, although allowed in special circumstances, becomes less acceptable because "praying together," "being a prayerful community," and "supporting each other's prayer life" are emphasized. Indeed, "the family that prays together, stays together." The "staying together" in this stage enjoys the ascendency.

When this type of prayer becomes ritualized in

religious services, the community senses its own worth. The earlier stage's precision falls to appropriateness; fittingness replaces detailed replication; the mark of perfection becomes acceptance. Mass, a community meal, requires above all an attending community. The recitation of the Divine Office in the quiet of one's room, though laudable, is a questionable substitute for its communal celebration in the chapel. Sacramental rituals no longer depend solely on the validity of matter and form for acceptability; they must also touch the unique requirements of these people at this time and in this situation. Indeed, where once the priestly minister trained in theology and exact in observance was hoped for, now someone who can speak for the assembled People of God—truly, sensitively, and fittingly—is fervently sought and psychologically required.

Although this second stage of mutual dependency is clearly a step above extrinsic evaluation because of its interpersonal emphasis, it soon calls for transcendence because of its restrictive tendencies. What is essentially constructed is an interpersonal prison formed by fear of being no one, maintained by guilt when one dares to be a someone on one's own, and made secure by the threat of personal exclusion, or even official expulsion, leading to isolation and interpersonal nothingness.

STAGE III: SHARED INDEPENDENCY

Interpersonal Development. Sometime during the junior year of high school, the need for inclusion normally begins shifting toward the need for independence. Sociologically, this may be attributed to factors as diverse as being in leadership positions at school, having to think about "my life," being able to hold a job and enjoy the free use of one's own money, and having a driver's license. All call for a degree of independence, personal decisions, and the acceptance of responsibility. Psychologically, maturing abilities lead to the breaking of dependency needs, while psychosexual development requires devaluing the accepting crowds in favor of love from a select few.

This new-found social and psychological independence is, however, precarious because it lacks experience and testing. The security of group dependency still attracts even while its confining narrowness repels. Given the newness and inner conflict, a fragile personal identity, where present, faces life tentatively and very warily.

Interpersonal sharing reflects this stage by being careful, by requiring strict equality and assured respect. Having finally attained "adulthood," one must not allow relationships to fall back into the controlling ways of group behavior so recently left. Commitment, though often sworn to, is hardly capable of being permanent, because of this fear.

Love, at this stage, although different from the "I'll die without you" need of the previous stage, still has a core of need ("I need you because I love you"). This love is based on my experience that you do not restrict my freedom to be me. ("If my religious superior forces me to come back home, I'll transfer provinces, or join another order, or just leave.") Where there is such a weighing and balancing with a constant eye to one's own worth, there is always the demand for equality, quid pro quo, a conditional commitment ("I'll love you, share with you intimately, yes, as long as you respect me and my freedom").

Many people never leave this third psychological stage. Their lives reveal a constant tension between a desire to share and a demand for independence. Think of a friend who moves from job to job "because they don't value me," or who uproots the family time and again in search of new growth opportunities and the assurance of personal freedom. Experience or recreation often serves as the reason for vacations taken without one's spouse; or backpacking trips enjoyed alone; or extramarital affairs entered into easily, if not often; or jobs pursued that demand extensive time away from one's partner, community, or family. Below these changing surfaces one may well find, while "in relationship," the drive to assert personal freedom.

Moral Development. Morality, at this stage, is decidedly situational. Gone is the subservience to extrinsic laws and authorities. What appears appropriate to the twin needs of sharing and independence determines good, what violates either, evil. And that determination belongs solely to the individual. Although they often seem to be arbitrary (especially to individuals or groups still relying on extrinsic duty or group authority), moral decisions made in this stage are firmly tied to the evolving processes of personal growth. As new information is assimilated, self-identity strengthens, and relational sharing deepens, moral judgments shift to fit these changing realities. Where other-centered duty and responsibility previously signaled a sound moral judgment, now an honest responsivity to this personal growth process measures the soundness.

Community Development. Community bonds necessarily appear to weaken as the individual struggles out of restrictive group dependencies. Domination by others is firmly rejected, and compliance for acceptance's sake is replaced by a demanding self-reliance. An example drawn from religious life follows, one which, *mutatis mutandis*, could easily apply to the struggle for independence within the boundaries of any large contemporary corporation.

Where previously house meetings were rarely missed, community assemblies gave inspiration, and "building community" was religiously pursued, such gatherings and expenditure of energy are willingly forsaken in the pursuit of one's work, one's studies, and one's select circle of friends.

Where large convents once gave community, small house groups now do; where only the exception lived outside the community's province or diocese, many take positions requiring life outside these traditional boundaries; where canon law required "living in one of our houses," a religious may now live alone, with members of other communities, with family, and even with nonreligious. And should a concerned superior or a restrictive congregation demand "coming back to the community," a crisis is likely to arise. Many priests and religious, in conflict, solve the crisis by leaving their dioceses or religious institutes. Some do have a crisis of faith or a vocational crisis, but for many the crisis is rather one of identity. Perpetual vows, eternal priesthood, a lifelong commitment: these must be understood as sincerely offered but contingent upon the evolving psychological requirement for independence so necessary at this level of growth.

Prayer and Ritual. Quite consistently, prayer in this stage tends to be quiet, listening, and decidedly personal. The relationship between God and the human being is experienced as between individuals, yet God is met primarily in the depths of one's own heart rather than in official prayers or communal expressions. Few words are spoken, attention is heightened, and the inner movements of inspiration are followed as long as they are not sensed as violating a hard-won maturity. "I'll follow you anywhere" needs an additional "I can," for the Spirit too must wait upon a calculated sharing and a struggling identity.

Ritual expressions are similar. Moments of deep silence are preferred to vocal prayers; a brief hug becomes a silent sign of peace; a circle of linked hands and bowed heads are an unintrusive sign of community. Liturgies are sought where preachers don't preach but communicate, and where congregations don't congregate too tightly but share. The emphasis is always on the freeing. Prayers requested, actions performed, directions given, entreaties made—all face silent rejection if perceived to violate independence and chosen giving of self.

("I am here with you, gladly; I will share with you, willingly; the presence and the love, however, must be determined by me").

STAGE IV: SHARED INTERDEPENDENCY

Interpersonal Development. Personal movement into this growth stage ordinarily occurs in our modern Western world any time between the ages of eighteen and forty. These years mark the ordinary boundaries of completed schooling, vocational choice, integration into a special relationship (or community), measurable success in a life-supporting occupation: taken together, the social bases of an adult identity. Through them, decisions are made, responsibilities assumed, difficulties faced, influence exercised, and commitments lived out; these both create and flow from a maturing self-worth and a quiet acceptance of one's own identity.

At this stage, a qualitative psychological change with three basic shifts takes place. Where previously an extrinsic presence fostered identity, now an intrinsic one does. Where a certainty about personal worth was required, an internal trust in the basic goodness of one's own life is realized. Where the drive for personal security has primarily motivated, the risk of following internal life movements assumes primacy. These three shifts—from extrinsic to intrinsic, from certainty to trust, from security to risk—form the necessary foundation for this stage of interpersonal growth.

The vigilant calculations of the previous stage disappear as the demand for external recognition and respect is replaced by self-respect. The fear that sharing will result in the losing of self vanishes; sharing now flows from and expresses a realized self-identity.

With the tension between independence and sharing progressively dissolved, relationship is marked in this stage by the following:

1. Each relationship is unique but not exclusive.
2. Life shared flows from the relationship outward to include others.

EARLIER GROWTH STAGES ILLUSTRATED				
Stage I	"I need"	"I am it"	"It is"	"I am no one"
Stage II	"I love you because I need you"	"I give myself away for the sake of the relationship"	"The relationship is"	"I am someone with you"
Stage III	"I need you because I love you"	"I give of myself and take from you, conditionally"	"I am"	"I am someone as long as I am careful"
Stage IV	"I love myself loving you"	"I find myself as I give myself"	"We are"	"I am someone"

3. Energy shared in one relationship energizes all relationships.

4. Commitment is made to the relationship as an extension and an expression of one's life.

5. The relationship itself becomes an enlivening source of personal and interpersonal life.

6. Continuity with one's inner life sustains the relationship, not any required activity or response from the other person.

7. For the first time a "we" appears as the need to protect "I" decreases.

What characterizes this stage is a self-presence, acceptance, and inwardness allowing for a growing personal and interpersonal life.

Moral Development. Out of this secure inwardness a new sense of morality rises. Earlier, laws and commands were extrinsic, society provided guards against destructive selfishness, and a calculated weighing of each situation protected a fragile identity. Now, a presence to the consistent direction of one's life assures personal and communal growth. Such growth is good; its hindering, evil. Steady moral pressure comes from the inner demand of a life that somehow is bigger and more important than me; it is, indeed, in charge of me. Moral choice lies in an attentive presence to that life. Moral decisions *made* in previous stages are in this stage *found*. Call it inspiration, intuition, life development. I must be attentive to this; and, on hearing, accept; and then get out of the way. To be moral is, humbly, to let my life live me. And this "me" is "us," for I only live and grow as I share a life that is "ours."

As "I" become "we," so life together can change from a more or less benevolent aggregate of "I's" to a community. Paradoxically, a healthy self-centeredness alone allows for the other-centeredness of communal life. This happens because community is really the recognition of, attention to, and sharing of only one life in which we all live, a life of which my life is a unique but nonseparate expression. I touch that life only through presence to its manifestation within me; I share that only through an inner acceptance of its value; it grows only as I trust its movement to realize itself through a personal expression that draws others consciously and acceptingly into it.

Community Development. In earlier stages the efforts at building community were directed outward. At this stage, community is experienced as the result of an internal recognition that personal and communal growth are distinct but united results of attending to life. Individuals do not build community, life does. Just as one cannot "get a friend" by making another into a friend, so too, people cannot "build a community." Both happen as the natural outcome of our being present to life and sharing that life out of our own experience.

Prayer and Ritual. Consistent with this development, prayer and ritual become interiorly inspired, in form diverse, in effect life-enhancing. Out of a presence to life, they flow as symbols that both express life and stimulate its growth. Indeed, they act as vehicles of unity, as means of sharing individual experiences in the context of community. In that sharing individuals and community grow together.

This inner inspiration calls especially for faith. Life is accepted as good, its direction discerned and trusted, its urgings believed in as the movement of the living Spirit in whom "we live and move and have our being." With habitual securities and certainties forsaken, and with personal control and decision making set aside in favor of an all-embracing life force, the individual now assumes the humble role of doing life's bidding rather than determining independently how life should express itself in prayer and ritual. Presenting myself to life, I find the prayerful form and content that expresses it at this moment. Whatever I find, I believe it to be the way for me to grow toward God, individually and within community.

STAGE V: CONTEMPLATIVE INCORPORATION

Interpersonal Development. Out of the relational gift of self described in the preceding stage comes a growing desire for unity. Although we undoubtedly spend much of our daily lives grappling with the demands of separateness and a world of others, the experience of interdependence reveals the intriguing possibility of unity underlying this behavioral diversity. Call this oneness "life," "spirit," "energy," "love": it exists, is experienced, and it constantly drives the individual to overcome the twin pains of external separateness and internal division.

The movement toward oneness comes, at first, almost accidentally. Any activity calling for intensity of focus or concentration may occasion it: quite often one of art, physical exertion, the appreciation of beauty, or prayer. No matter the extent of prior practice or familiarity, this unitive experience brings a startling newness.

Consider the following example. I have a favorite piece of symphonic music, a constant companion. In the past, listening has occasioned

- intellectual appreciation of the composition, recognition of the parts played by different instruments and their interrelationships, and enjoyment flowing from the overall harmonious effect.
- a sense of knowing better and understanding more deeply the composer, conductor, and individual artists.
- an imaginative journey into the world described for me through the composition's "story."
- a relaxation of tension and stress and an emotional upsurge and cathartic release, as I turn from the discordant, demanding voices of daily living to the one voice of the music.

In each of these listening experiences, no matter the intensity or depth, there still existed two elements: I (in my thinking, feeling, imagining, relaxing) and the music.

At any moment, however, something new may happen. Simple presence may lead to a sense of being drawn into the music, of losing myself in it. Besides shutting down all sense of the world around me, even my reflective attention to the music's effect on me ceases. Only the music remains; even the sense of self disappears. Later, on returning to ordinary experience, I may recognize that transient state as quite different, valuable, and remarkable for its integrating power. ("I lost all sense of where I was; it was like a new existence.")

Similar experiences happen with increasing frequency as identity solidifies, self-trust deepens, faith in life's unifying power grows, and the risk of giving up control over life becomes habitual. In fact, this "other way of being" may soon be approached almost at will. Usually, this requires a set of definite clues, situations, or demands that when responded to lead into an alternate reality. With discipline and practical experience, however, this way of being seems to become a part of ordinary life and less a distinct reality. A shift of focus, an inner opening, an expanding of awareness, an embracing of oneness: suddenly, diversity and the consciousness of separateness may vanish.

It should be noted that this unitive experience cannot be made to happen, cannot be forced or done. Rather, the person chooses to enter an occasion and pause, as it were, on the threshold of unity. Out of that attentive and expectant presence oneness may spring, if and as the power of life draws the individual into itself. All the individual can do is *be* steadily and sensitively there; the rest is up to a life power greater than self.

Moral Development. As in the previous stage, morality is internal. In form, it recognizes that we are designed to live in quite different realities, including one where unity reigns. Although we may be "good" in our ordinary reality, goodness is now understood to include the acceptance of this unitive reality, the required discipline and training for approaching this reality, the inner urge toward unity, the humbly patient presentation of self in situations with unitive potential, and the willingness to risk the not-to-be-controlled unitive experience. In a word, that which *integrates* is good, *disintegrates*, bad.

Community Development. Paradoxically, community now becomes an interior experience. Although in sharing activities externally this one resembles other stages, internally, unity/community is realized simply as a given. "I" and "you" may have become "we" before; now they appear only as illusory components of "we." "We are" spoke clearly of *shared interdependency* (stage IV); "We is be-

coming" names well this integrative movement into a reality where unity alone exists.

The indicators of this kind of community fall into three categories: (1) *in preparation:* discipline, presence, trust, listening, humility, expectancy, and openness; (2) *in experience:* intensity, interiority, healing, merging, faith, and being caught up; (3) *in result:* peace, wholeness, gratitude, love, anticipation, and intensified desire for unity.

Community is still experienced as a gift, but now a gift transcending individual community members. No longer does stage IV's "giving myself," "loving myself loving you," "sharing life and in life" satisfactorily describe community. These bespeak action to overcome separateness. Now, one's inner sense of community comes more from being than doing, from being caught up in rather than taking action, from discovering oneness rather than striving for it, from being swept up in the forceful unity of life rather than uniting oneself to a universal life force. As in the preceding stage, we cannot "build community," but now life does not do so either. Community cannot be built because community simply is.

Prayer and Ritual. In form, these become hospitality; in content, a vision of unity; in expression, an active reception. They are marked by careful preparation for a divine visitation, humble expectation of an approaching divine presence, and the grateful giving way to the entering activity of a divine Guest.

Whatever prayers are offered or rituals performed, they create a disciplined and focused personal expectation. Driven by the urge for wholeness, at this stage we use any available means to invite our God's embracing action. That the divine can approach, does seek oneness with us, may draw us into itself, we do not doubt and clearly envision. Hope, a memory of the future, drives our expectation and paints the picture of oneness. So we wait, believing in the loving darkness. When the divine knock signals Presence, we open our spirits wide, admit our God, and accept a fullness and unity already ours in Love. The prayers and rituals of hospitality prepare the approach. As our God wills, we are transformed from invitor to host to guest.

STAGE VI: CONTEMPLATIVE EXPRESSION

Interpersonal Development. The discussion of the previous growth stages has been based on ordinarily available human experience. The sensitive, self-present adult may at least occasionally or analogously know moments of shared interdependency (stage IV) and contemplative incorporation (stage V). Once having traveled the road to adulthood, we can look back on the earlier stages as old friends, ones we frequently reencounter.

Not so now. In the just-completed fifth stage, contemplative incorporation, the focused attention, the invitation in faith, the active reception of a unifying presence moved us from a state where diversity is given to one where unity alone exists. We lived, now in one state, now the other. However, the sixth and final stage, contemplative expression, presents us with the uncommon situation of living at once in two realities, one of diversity and one of unity. Indeed, to meet a person living in this state is to experience the unity expressing itself in and through the diversity.

As the need for discipline diminishes and hyperattention quiets, all focus toward an approaching presence ceases. Day-by-day living resumes, but now as the expression of a new-found interpersonal being. These strong life moments somehow alter us and live on in us even as we go about our otherwise unchanged daily lives. ("All season her presence remained; even though I was alone, I was never apart from her.") In such experiences the other somehow continues to live on *in* a person even though time and place physically separate them. For most people such a unitive experience ebbs and flows: now the unity is strongly felt, now it is more a memory than a lived reality.

For the world's great "holy men and women," this stage becomes a state of being. "I" simply is the constant expression of "us"; no longer does individual life exist even in dealing with ordinary daily life. For such as these, at least analogously, Christ's "I and the Father are one" (Jn 9:30) is their experience also.

Stage V depended essentially on the process of heightened awareness and trusting focus, as the person moved in and out of the unitive experience. In stage VI, the awareness and focus are ordinary in intensity. But they are expanded. Separateness and diversity are experienced as only part of the truth. The person experiences the reality of unity simultaneously with the reality of separateness.

Moral Development. Morality now appears to be essentially changed. Before, "to be" (metaphysic) and "to be good" (ethic) differed. A moral decision marked a choice among alternative ways of expressing one's life in a given instance. Now, however, life and morality merge, as "to be" is "to be good." The only immoral choice would be that of ceasing to exist; all other choices are moral as necessarily revealing the unity in diversity that is relational life.

Community Development. Community becomes the lived expression of oneness. Not only has building community vanished, even becoming community no longer fits. I simply am community. To be is to be an expression of community; to see me is to see community. This identity between the individual and community lies behind many familiar Scriptural statements such as "He who has seen me has seen the Father" (Jn 14:19) and "Father, may they be one in us, even as you are in me and I am in you" (Jn 17:21).

How does this community act? By love. As Jesus said, "Love one another as I have loved you" (Jn 15:9). How did Jesus love us? "In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only son into the world, so that we might live through him" (1 Jn 4:7). "I love myself loving you" (stage IV) and loving incorporation (stage V) no longer suffice as the measures of community. Now community expresses a unity that is love. Indeed, community and life, expression of love, are identical. They are the gift of unity to a world of diversity "that has been groaning in travail together until now" (Rom 8:22), the revelation that relationship alone ultimately "is."

Prayer and Ritual. Given this unitive state, prayer becomes revelation and ritual becomes service. No longer means of attaining unity, they drop their interior focus. Flowing out of unity, a prayerful life shares itself through service. In every action God is praised and thanked as the divine love is revealed and the gift of divine life is presented through unity with the divine. Gone are the alternating movements between contemplation and action as focus moved cyclically from other to self. Even the dichotomy between exterior and interior disappears, since the life of one is the life of the other and both are the life of relationship. The gift that the soldier-mystic St. Ignatius of Loyola desired ("contemplation in action") well states the

FINAL STAGES OF GROWTH ILLUSTRATED				
Stage V	"I am becoming love"	"I am finding myself in us"	"We is becoming"	"I am becoming someone"
Stage VI	"I am love"	"I express us"	"We is"	"Someone is"

prayerful resolution and ritual expression in this stage where diversity is now also unity.

STAGES REVIEWED

The six stages and the four areas within each have been presented from the point of view of experiences readily available to people who have experienced them. The exposition has attempted throughout to move from experience to theory rather than from theory to experience. My next step will be to gather data to confirm that precisely these stages are being experienced and that people are in reality finding themselves living in one or more of them. Readers of this article are sincerely invited to send their comments to me in this regard.

The six stages of relational growth have been described separately. From this, one could conclude that the categories are sequential, that once, for example, stage III is reached only activities associated with that stage will happen until stage IV is entered. But this is not accurate. In reality, we seem to move progressively through the stages in succession by "resting in" or "being generally at home" in a given one. At the same time, on a certain day, or in a particular situation, or with special people, we may discover ourselves acting as if we were living in an earlier or later stage. For instance, adults ordinarily living a life of shared independency (stage IV) may on a visit to their parents' home find themselves looking for parental approval, or on a trip with grown siblings recognize themselves quite surprisingly demanding attention, competing, and playing domination games. Then again, a generally independent and calculating adult may be that way with everyone except some one person with whom sharing, risk, and trust somehow come easy.

Movement from stage to stage generally progresses with age, grace, opportunities, responsibilities, and with abilities associated with increased life experience. In our present Western society—a civilization in which the first and second stages predominate—growth usually depends upon the understanding, support, and guidance of individuals who refuse to find their identity anywhere except within themselves, and who are willing to share the fruits of their life without any strings attached. In other words, we grow through the influence of people capable of love and who are willing to love us.

What chance do we have of meeting such people? Experience indicates that when a society is "resting in" a particular stage, this allows some individuals within that society, almost in reaction, to find themselves two stages further on in growth. Thus, in a society where identity is sought through meeting external standards (stage I), some individuals will experience theirs interiorly (stage III); where being "part of the gang" is the social norm for worth (stage II), some will be relating lovingly out of their own worth (stage IV). If we accept, therefore, that our modern Western world exists principally in the first two stages, then stages III and IV should be available to growing numbers of individuals within our civilization.

What about the contemplative stages, V and VI? Clearly, many of us know moments within stage V, contemplative incorporation. Indeed, some few of us seem to be able to move rather easily between the realities of diversity and unity. If and as our society grows into shared independency (stage III), more of us should be able to operate readily within this fifth stage.

The final stage, contemplative expression, embraces the world's great religious leaders, its sages and prophets, mystics and saints. These have been people born out of their time, not able to be explained by the family, neighborhood, country, or civilization that has nurtured them. Somehow in the divine grace, they have realized a state of life in which unity and diversity, indeed unity in diversity, has become their ordinary experience. As for those of us not so blessed, if we can dare to give up certainty, security, and control, if we will embrace faith, trust, and risk as a way of life, and if we are willing to accept both the experience and the discipline of the unitive life, then this stage may open to us—now as fleeting moments, now as lingering memories, now as indwelling experiences. And some day, we hope, this stage may simply be our life. Preparation and hope, discipline and risk, trust and the willingness to grow: this is the path to our human destiny.

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EMOTIONAL AND SPIRITUAL HEALING AT SOUTHDOWN
Interview with Canice Connors, O.F.M., Conv.,

Southdown is a residential center providing solitude and therapy for priests and religious who are experiencing personal difficulties in the form of psychological conflicts, sexual problems, chemical dependence, or alcohol abuse. It is located in Canada, 30 miles north of Toronto, Ontario, near the small town of Aurora. The center was founded in 1965 by a recovering alcoholic priest and a layman who had taken him in when he was exiled from his diocese because of his alcohol problem. At first the center treated only alcoholic priests and was patterned after Guest House, a treatment center for priests in Rochester, Minnesota. Eventually, religious women and brothers were accepted as Southdown's scope of service became broader.

HD: Father Connors, how did you become involved in Southdown?
Connors: My being here is attributable to the persuasive encouragement of a provincial superior who is currently a member of Southdown's Board of Directors. Previously, I was involved in administrative work for the Archdiocese of Baltimore, where I received broad exposure to ecclesial issues. University teaching, private therapeutic work, and consultation with dioceses and religious communities occupied my time before working in Baltimore.

HD: How has the program at Southdown evolved over the years?
Connors: Southdown's original mission and style were directly linked to the Rochester, Minnesota, Guest House. Later, its services were extended to a broader range of emotional problems among male clergy. During the past five years women religious have been invited to participate, and over the last three years Southdown has developed an integrative approach to the care of a broad range of human problems. In the beginning, we offered enough rooms to care for twenty-two men. Now, Southdown serves forty persons, nineteen of whom are religious women. Since its founding, approximately forty percent of its residents have been from Canada, forty percent from the United States, and twenty percent from other English-speaking parts of the world.

HD: What disciplines are represented on the staff?
Connors: Southdown has thirteen full-time positions covered by nineteen different professionals. The team includes psychologists, psychiatrists, nurses, spiritual directors, addiction counselors, and an internist. Staff members are men and women, both lay and clerical. There is an additional full-time position designated for aftercare. Two full-time spiritual direction positions are covered by three priests, a sister, and a brother.

HD: How does Southdown differ from other treatment centers?
Connors: Our distinguishing trait is a willingness to receive both alcoholics and the emotionally distressed. No one has measured the effectiveness of one center's program over another, but directors of the House of Affirmation, Guest House, centers sponsored by the Paraclete Fathers, and St. Luke's Institute have agreed to meet annually to share experience in an effort to establish cooperative patterns and criteria for differential placement. Each resident who comes to Southdown is sponsored by a religious order, congregation, or diocese. We have also received a few Protestant clergymen.

HD: Do any patterns emerge among the people in need of facilities like Southdown?
Connors: As long as we are aware that generalizations cover over as much as they reveal and that each person is unique, some anecdotal summaries may be helpful. Usually among us are people such as a priest who has traded off risking self-development for masking personal hurt. Parishioners perceive him as a hard worker and usually an ef-

Conducted for HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
by Philip Kelly, O.F.M., Conv.

fective preacher and counselor. But pressure in the middle years can crack the trusted defenses, and he tastes depression for the first time. He makes increased investments in labor to escape the depression but finds no relief until he finally asks for the help he has been offering to others.

A sister, in search of perfection, has neglected her need for affection and denied her sexuality. She has spoken convincingly about God's goodness to others but is an agnostic about God's delight in her, so loneliness and isolation have become bitter habits for her.

Or, a brother approves the wisdom of the Creator in all, but he excludes anger from his emotional repertoire. For years the staid and unflappable strong man of school and community, he surprisingly stumbles into an incident of impotent rage and follows a dark passage through despair. These are some generalized examples of people who are able to use what Southdown has to offer.

HD: What is the daily routine for your residents?
Connors: It encompasses individual appointments, group exercises, opportunities for silence, and occasions to be together with peers in community. Three types of group process take place. One cluster of groups is designed to address a variety of presenting problems like anger, sexuality, depression, or parenting patterns. A second cluster features expressive group therapies, such as bibliodrama, art, dance, and dreams and fantasies. A third cluster of groups is used for supportive work, including reviews of progress and decision making.

Each resident is introduced to a complete exercise program involving yoga, swimming, and body building, with attention also to nutritional habits. A complete Alcoholics Anonymous program with required attendance at outside meetings is offered for the chemically addicted. Everyone in the program participates in small group learning experiences, which rotate on a four-week cycle and include Jungian personality constructs, social theory, nutrition, and theology.

Before departure, each resident is expected to do a theological case study based on his or her experience of suffering. All activities support and depend on individual therapy and spiritual direction. The specific course of activities for any resident is based on information gathered from the assessment period and from daily staff evaluations. Each resident's primary therapist is charged with final responsibility for designing a person's total program.

HD: What is the average length of stay?
Connors: Currently, 164 days, an average that has been steadily increasing over the past four years. Residents are encouraged to identify and trust personal cues for their readiness to leave, and each seeks a hearing from peers. When the support group affirms the perception of readiness, the primary therapist then seeks the judgment of the entire staff. The community receiving the resident often experiences a strange mixture of delight and confusion. Interpretation to them of what has taken place during the residency is essential. Design for a two-year follow-up period is also nearing completion.

HD: Have you noticed any relationship between emotional and spiritual healing?
Connors: For years we resisted consideration of this relationship, either practically or theoretically. Many came to Southdown angry and resentful toward the spiritualities that had shaped their lives. Although the staff attempted to identify the spiritual dimension as a pertinent question, residents showed little enthusiasm for such speculation. The climate changed, however, when religious women were introduced into the residential community. Their participation resulted in tolerance for and acceptance of regular days of reflection and group spiritual direction.

An increasing enthusiasm to interrelate all aspects of the healing process has emerged during the past three and a half years. Therapists and spiritual directors coordinate their work with each resident and include direct references to the quality of spiritual life while discussing the resident's general well-being. Residents consequently experience an integration of emotional and spiritual healing.

A specially crafted faith/life history has been introduced into the initial assessment procedure. This suggests to the residents, right at the start of their therapeutic involvement, that the psychological, medical, physical, and biographical aspects of their lives are interrelated. The individual can be the only effective agent for connecting such fragments into a meaningful whole.

Individual therapy is supported and enhanced by both small and large group opportunities for reflecting on frequently recurring themes such as effective prayer, the presence of God in suffering and darkness, personal responsibility, and the character of divine intervention.

Our staff is currently interested in correlating personality styles, as described by the Myers-

Briggs typology, with approaches to prayer. Though not yet documented in scientific fashion, we find that many residents seem to have chosen to idealize and undertake a prayer life at odds with the dynamics of their personality, resulting in long periods of dissatisfaction and failure. They begin to experience prayer with more energy and enthusiasm when alerted to the need to choose a prayer style congruent with their personality.

Community liturgies are another occasion for uncovering the relationship between emotional and spiritual healing, by weaving personal stories of healing with related themes in Scripture.

HD: Have you developed any opinions about homosexuality?
Connors: The topic of homosexuality arouses anxiety in many people today in the way alcoholism did twenty years ago. A gradual shift toward responding to alcoholism rather than reacting to the alcoholic has taken place as a result of the educational strategies of Alcoholics Anonymous. Referral for alcohol treatment is now conducted with calm expectation, and the recovering alcoholic is welcomed back to the community with little, if any, loss of status or esteem. I would hope that similar benefits will result from current efforts to discuss issues in human sexuality. Presently, referrals we receive involving homosexuality are terse and anxious, with minimal expectation for a successful transition to active ministry.

Those referred on the basis of a homosexual incident or disclosure have invested years in disguising their sexual identity and practising self-hatred. Three years ago, there was a reluctance among Southdown residents to support an open discussion of homosexuality in group sessions. Now the question is as much a part of the give and take as any other aspect of human experience. Program emphasis stresses the requirements of a satisfying celibate lifestyle. In this celibate context, sexual preference is subordinate to a well-integrated sexuality. The gift offered at the time of religious profession or ordination was frequently not that of an adult sexuality, and we attend to upgrading the gift at Southdown.

We are also learning more about the suffering and loss of freedom in those affected with extreme sexual compulsions. It is truly sad to see a brilliant teacher or preacher completely diverted by the narrowing enterprise of hoarding pornographic literature. In extreme cases, we have begun using antiandrogens. The experience of relief and a return to enthusiasm in ministry has been dramatic.

HD: You mentioned earlier that the A.A. program is included at Southdown. How does it fit into your holistic approach?
Connors: I believe we are somewhat unique in trying to integrate the treatment of alcoholics with people who are emotionally ill. Our sister institutions have decided on the basis of their experience to specialize, but our choice is to continue serving both the chemically dependent and the psychologically distressed. In practice, we insist that all those involved with alcohol treatment have program requirements over and above those exacted of other residents. An additional hour of personal counseling with an addiction counselor and attendance at A.A. meetings outside the institution in addition to a closed meeting within are required. We benefit immensely from having an A.A. philosophy present in our community, for it has a practical and spiritual effect on everyone here. The therapy program is congruent with and supportive of the A.A. program.

HD: What about prevention?
Connors: Many of our residents would have been served well if their formative spiritualities had been more creation centered and less perfection oriented. We badly need a spirituality of compassion. Such an approach would put more emphasis on the celebration of life rather than its denial and suppression. Intensifying the trend toward the value of community over the value of work in religious life can contribute much to prevention. If some of the time, energy, and resources of formation programs were invested in other phases of religious life, such as midlife renewal, the payoffs in prevention would be considerable.

HD: What have you learned about human development since coming to Southdown?
Connors: Current literature on human development, especially that cast in a holistic metaphor, has been helpful for interpreting and understanding recurring themes in the stories heard at Southdown. An example that comes to mind is a theme that accents the relationship between human development and suffering. Once the full presence of personal suffering is confessed and various strategies for half-telling the truth are put aside, energy for growth is released that informs and gives direction to the healing process. A primary condition for the release of this energy is a willingness to trust the darkness that seems to leaven personal suffering. Fully facing suffering with a confidence that destruction will not ensue is an essential attitude for human growth and development.

My Southdown experience brings to mind the often-forgotten notion that a primary block to development is the need to be in complete control of one's life. Our residents are invited to let go of their excessive control within the safe context of group and face-to-face encounters. When the time to respond is ripe, the tight grasp of control yields to the unfolding processes of self-disclosure and ensuing growth.

PSYCHOLOGY AND FAITH
IN PASTORAL MINISTRY

John L. Gibson, S.J.

In the context of ministries today, religious men and women find their worth as ministers challenged from many directions. Strident voices assert that some systems and methodologies appear to be as powerful as religious charisms for treating the gravest symptoms of suffering endured by human beings.

Much of today's physical pain, for instance, submits quite convincingly to medicine's powerful antidotes, but medicine does not treat the human spirit. Sometimes more threatening to religious men and women is the idea that psychology and psychiatry might possess all that is necessary for meeting human needs—needs traditionally met by religious inspirations and charisms. In fact, psychology and psychiatry do not pretend to be so comprehensively effective in their attempts to alleviate human suffering. But their frequent success does pose a sharp challenge to pastoral ministers who are pressed to ask what they, as apostolic followers of Christ, offer people that is unique.

This article examines four areas of pastoral ministry where the minister penetrates those regions of the heart that continue to puzzle even the most attractive psychological systems, and it uses concrete, fictionalized examples from actual ministry at a critical care hospital in the midwest. The four channels through which ministers communicate God to those they serve include: (1) forgiving wrongdoing, (2) responding to God by becoming a loving person, (3) praying, and (4) finding God through human reminders of God's presence.

DEALING WITH ANGER

"God must be punishing me. Why else would this happen?" "I thought I lived a good life until this."

Many have heard the voice of confusion and desperation in people who find their living patterns and self-image suddenly upset by injury or disease. Affliction throws them into confinement in a hospital, and as patients they feel either victimized, unjustly accused and condemned, or guilty and deserving of their plight. As victims they are angry at their accusers; as condemned criminals they are angry at themselves. What does psychology suggest they do with their anger?

From the psychological point of view, the innocent victim's anger is healthy, because such a patient does not deserve the pain and suffering. Anger reflects the positive value that a person places on his or her own life. By communicating the anger to a caring listener, the patient realizes that he or she is a worthwhile human being even when suffering affliction. The anger is unhealthy only when it overwhelms or paralyzes the afflicted person. In such a case, coping mechanisms have failed, and psychology sets in motion the procedures that are intended to restore the person to the healthy conviction that "anger will not annihilate me; I will survive once more." In this way, the person learns that he or she has the necessary mental and emotional resources for coping.

In his book *Love Against Hate*, Karl Menninger points out that the more destructive anger is that

which is directed toward the self. This anger is associated with guilt. The person who has judged the self to be guilty is one whose conscience has imposed severe norms on all decisions and behaviors. Such norms are so harsh that no matter how the individual behaves, he or she cannot win.

According to Menninger, a voice of the classical psychoanalytic position, psychoanalysis strives to loosen the tight constraint that the conscience enjoys over the wishes and desires of the self. The goal is to help a person think, speak, and act without feeling inhibited, embarrassed, or angry about the thoughts, the words, and the actions. If the conscience's norms do in fact relax, the anger at self dissipates. The person is not as inclined to blame the self for a misfortune such as disease.

Religious circles hesitate to declare guilt guilty of destroying human health. Guilt may be healthy, especially if it is a response to real wrongs committed in thought, word, and action. The psychoanalyst may effectively dislodge the conscience's powerful hold so that the individual has emotional freedom, but does such freedom in itself assure emotional growth? If a patient's disease opens memory's doors to past regrets and mistakes, does the minister help relax the patient's conscience by moving him or her to a not-guilty verdict about past behavior? "Indeed not!" exclaims O. H. Mowrer in his study, *The Crisis in Psychiatry and Religion*.

A PASTORAL RESPONSE

The way hospital chaplains view the role of guilt tailors the way they respond to the self-condemning patient. In one instance, the chaplain visited a cancer patient, Joseph, who had a malignancy in his neck. After he had volunteered to tell the chaplain that he felt guilty about several situations in his life, he said:

P (patient): I don't know about kids these days.
C (chaplain): You're angry at your son?
P: No, I went through a divorce too. My first wife suspected me of having a relationship with another woman. Four different times during our marriage she thought I was having an affair. Each time I applied for a divorce. After thirty years of marriage, I finally decided enough was enough. The turning point for my wife came when she had a mental breakdown. When that happened, I figured it was better for both of us if we got the divorce. After the divorce was finalized, I met a woman friend with whom I had had Christmas card contact, nothing more than that. I had received cards from her since before my first marriage. After my divorce, I found out she was divorced too, and we decided to marry. I've been happy for the past two years with our marriage.

C: So you have found some measure of contentment that was lacking in your first marriage?
P: (with some sadness) I think so.
C: Have you forgiven yourself for any responsibility that you may have had for the problems in your first marriage?
P: I probably could do more of that.

To help Joseph find more psychological freedom and contentment, guilt resolution apparently requires that Joseph not be too hard on himself. It seems that he might be happier if he loosened himself from the fetters of conscience that remind him of what he might have done to save the marriage. Freed from a villainous conscience, he could more comfortably pursue a relationship of contentment with his second wife.

The religious point of view offers another possibility. The anger toward self that Joseph feels is a healthy coming to terms with the real neglect that he may have displayed toward his wife. The anger and its concomitant guilt are simply signs of a healthy conscience. Joseph never really named the sin of his own failure to love his wife well enough. Consequently, he is unable to forgive himself. Valuable pastoral care effectively takes place when Joseph names his sin and then forgives himself for what he did or failed to do.

This issue touches off much pastoral ill feeling. The older Catholic attitude toward confession provoked fear that if a guilty conscience did not declare its guilt, the person would suffer annihilation. Such a conscience did not seek the genuine forgiveness that is a restoration of a mutual love relationship between the person, fellow human beings, and God. Instead, it frantically sought protection and security. The new consciousness about confession proclaims peace to the sinner, but it is a peace that comes only with the admission of failure to love; it is the peace of the forgiven sinner.

MORE THAN DEPRESSION

Compare the attitude of a 74-year-old patient named George, who had a foot disorder, with that of Joseph. Medical personnel who had contact with George described him as withdrawn and depressed. The chaplain's conversation with him went as follows:

P: I've been thinking about things here in the hospital.
C: Being here has given you an opportunity to look at some things about yourself that you've ignored in the past?
P: Yes (tearfully). I was mean to my daughter and yelled at her at home. I was living with my daughter; I've been a bother to her because I can't hold my urine. I've yelled at her and said things I shouldn't have said.

CHANNELS TO GOD

FORGIVING WRONGDOING

RESPONDING TO GOD BY BECOMING A LOVING PERSON

PRAYING

FINDING GOD THROUGH HUMAN REMINDERS OF GOD'S PRESENCE

Here the chaplain could have talked about George's feelings of helplessness and self-disparagement arising with the onset of his physical handicap. Then the chaplain could have helped him relax his conscience by empathizing with his anger at the physical disorder, which was being displaced onto his daughter. Having ventilated his feelings, George would have felt better about himself.

Instead, the chaplain chose to focus on the fact that George's embarrassed self was not as helpless as he may have supposed. His capacity to love could survive the onslaught of uncontrollable urine:

C: So what you said and did really hurt your daughter.

P: (sobbing) Yes, it did! (Here he is voicing his sin.)

C: You brought pain to your daughter. That must be hard for you to tell me. (He nods.) Do you believe you're forgiven?

P: (with relief) Yes!

C: You are forgiven. (George is still crying.) You must really love your daughter. Those tears tell me that she means a lot to you.

P: Yes she does, and I do love her.

George's affection was a responsible one that admitted wrongdoing and received forgiveness. But some argue that holding a person responsible before God and fellow human beings places unnecessary burdens on suffering people.

RESPONSIBILITY IS CENTRAL

In *Theories of Counseling and Psychotherapy*, psychologist C. H. Patterson summarizes fourteen therapeutic methods and their goals. The general trend of his descriptions suggests that psychologically healthy human beings have the internal resources to assume responsibility for their lives. Therapy enables human beings to mobilize their emotions and thought processes to meet crises when they occur, to make prudent choices about what they can or cannot do, and to find happiness of mind and heart. Therapy, therefore, helps people to be at home with both limitation and strength, vulnerability and power, pain and contentment. Therapy helps people choose values and live out those values, so that they constantly move forward to growth, maturity, and adulthood.

Responsibility for oneself includes continuing growth in self-knowledge, self-acceptance, and self-contentment. Responsibility toward others blossoms from responsibility for oneself. A person who knows, accepts, and is at home with himself or herself knows, accepts, and is at home with others. Such a person handles both friendships and loneliness well and is able to express sadness as well as joy, anger as well as calm.

The religious point of view startles the psychological. St. Catherine of Siena received the puzzling revelation that "You are the one who is not, and I am the One who is." A person is no longer respon-

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sible for himself or herself when the self is founded on the One to whom the person responds. The minister's focus is on the patient's ability to respond to that authentic source of self. When a psychologist asks, "How do you handle loneliness?" the minister asks, "How do you deal with the fact that even if your husband dies and leaves you alone, you are really not alone?" When the psychologist desensitizes in order to localize fear, the chaplain encourages the patient—with Jesus' authority to give courage—to take heart and not be afraid. It is naive, however, to refuse to listen to a person's fear; and simply saying, "Have courage!" is not enough. To listen to a person's fear and then respond by saying, "You are afraid, but the fear need not possess you. You are not fear's victim; you can move beyond the fear if you wish" reflects an ability to respond to the divine offering of courage.

EXAMPLES OF CARE

Joachim is a 63-year-old Catholic who had bypass surgery in the winter and has been doing his prescribed daily exercises ever since. In the summer he admitted himself to the hospital after an overly exhausting walk and was scheduled for a pulmonary catheterization. When the chaplain visited him, he was next in line for the "cath lab." Seconds before the chaplain came, Joachim heard an emergency call sounding through the hospital corridors. The emergency was in the lab, and Joseph became quite fearful. He asked the chaplain to give him the Eucharist and on receiving it he began to sob.

C: When I gave you Communion, you began to cry. Do you know what the tears mean?
P: I've been receiving Communion every First Friday for the past several years.
C: Communion touches you in a special way; you want to receive it so faithfully!
P: Yes, it encourages me.

Joachim entered the lab for surgery with words of gratitude, not fear, on his lips.

Maria is a 50-year-old woman who was admitted into the hospital because of a pulmonary embolism. Conversations with her have disclosed that she grew up in several boarding homes as an orphan. She married at 18, and not many years later her husband died, leaving her with four children. She took on several jobs to feed, clothe, and house her children. Ten years ago she contracted lung cancer and battled the cancer for six years before it was contained. During one of her hospitalizations, she witnessed another patient fall from a wheel chair and, because of the peculiar nature of the fall, immediately suffocate to death. Maria suffered a mental breakdown occasioned by her neurotic fear of death, and she proceeded to undergo psychiatric treatment. Five weeks into treatment she was informed that she had brain cancer, would not walk again, and would probably have two years to live.

Maria's sense of responsibility does not make itself evident to psychological analysis. She lacks the ability to manage social relationships and to take stable control of her life. She drains herself of much psychic energy when she stews and frets about her nephew's stubborn refusal to give her solace and comfort. Maria's ability to respond, on the other hand, shines at those moments when, in faith, she decides to pray.

P: When I pray, I pray for my family, my health, and Eugene. But when I pray, I'm always left with the feeling that these are not what I really want to pray for.
C: What is it that you really want?
P: I'm not sure. I guess I want to live for a long time.
C: What is it that gives you the desire to live, Maria?
P: I want to see my grandchildren grow up.

Even with the pain and suffering that have wracked her body and her psyche, Maria is still mindful of her personal desires, and out of those desires she speaks to a God in whom she has faith. Her faith has opened her heart to the hope that longs for life to continue, and her tortured face still sparkles when she talks about the objective of her faith and her hope—love for her family. In the midst of her pain, she continues to respond gratefully when asked about God's gift to her of prolonged life.

PRAYER GIVES SUPPORT

Although prayer is not directly discussed in most types of psychotherapy, the experience of God in prayer gives life and freedom to many who are suffering. The sustaining power of prayer manifests itself with many patients.

Rosella spent forty-five minutes telling the chaplain what meant the most to her in life. The chaplain had entered her room knowing that she was receiving daily chemotherapy treatments and that her daughter had died two days previously in the middle of such treatments. In essence, Rosella told the chaplain that her world was ruined because the daughter who had been most devoted to her died, three of her sons had married non-Italians, and her children no longer depended on her.

The chaplain was surprised when Rosella said that prayer occupied the deepest place in her heart. "Prayer keeps me alive. I appreciate every day when I pray," she said.

Sue Ellen is a 28-year-old Baptist woman who has struggled with ovarian cancer for two years. She works as a secretary in order to support two children. She is a precariously independent

> ## Guilt may be healthy, especially if it is a response to real wrongs committed in thought, word, and action

woman; yet she capsulized the feelings of many cancer patients about prayer by saying, "When I pray, I know I'm not alone. There's Someone who is watching over me and caring for me. When I fall, God is there waiting to pick me up, giving me the strength to stand when I need it."

Pastoral ministers discover that they truly appreciate what Rosella, Sue Ellen, and other patients say about prayer only when their own prayer is alive and active. Prayer as a resource remains substantially hidden from contemporary psychology *per se*, but moments of prayer and solitude sensitize the minister's eyes, ears, and heart to faith's impact on others' mental attitudes and emotions.

CHAPLAIN'S ROLE SPECIAL

In the book *Countertransference*, psychiatrist Arthur Feiner lucidly explains how countertransference and transference can enhance the success of psychotherapy. I may "transfer" my feelings and attitudes about my brother Jim to the therapeutic setting, so that my feelings and attitudes toward the therapist mirror those I have toward Jim. My therapist, on the other hand, may "counter-transfer" personal feelings and mindsets, so that the way the therapist communicates with me closely resembles the communication patterns with an important person in his or her life. What are the transference dynamics when someone communicates with the pastoral minister?

The minister is a direct reminder-in-person that God is alive and present. For some patients, God may be a just and severe judge; for other patients, a compassionate, warm friend; for still others, a nonentity. Even when Schizophrenic patients are delusional, they still seem able to distinguish the church representative from other people.

A hospital chaplain, in one case, had a four-week relationship established with Stanley, a patient with organic brain syndrome. His blend of Polish and English usually resulted in sheer babble, but a cross that the chaplain was wearing triggered coherent associations with churches that Stanley had visited, priests he had known, and prayers he had learned in grade school.

In the case of the patient who is not mentally ill, the word "chaplain" and the cross, habit, collar, or any of a number of symbols communicate to the patient that a reminder of God is at hand. The patient's style of communication with the chaplain often resembles the patient's style of communication with God. The religious transference dynamic at work finds expression in a paradigm from Scripture, when Jesus visits his disciples by the Sea of Tiberias (Jn 21:4–19).

The way the chaplain approaches the patient parallels the way Jesus approached his disciples in this encounter. The chaplain, a reminder that God is present, greets the patient just as Jesus greeted his disciples. The warmth of the greeting draws a response from the patient even though the patient does not really know the chaplain. How does the patient respond? Similar to the disciples, who utter forth the disappointing fact that they have not netted any fish, the patient also voices pain. The chaplain does not know what exploring that pain will reveal but is confident in saying, like Jesus, "Put in your net and you'll find something."

A chaplain's Saturday afternoon conversation with Cornelius, a victim of prostatic cancer, bears similarity to Jesus' revelation to his disciples at the end of John's Gospel. Cornelius did not mince words about what bothered him: "I'm not feeling good at all. I feel like I'm dying." He did not hesitate, however, to sideline the temptation to let fear triumph. With courage, he put in his net, that is, he gently and delicately began to ponder the meaning of his upcoming death.

C: What do you imagine death will be like for you, Cornelius?
P: I'll be meeting my maker.
C: And what will happen when you meet him?
P: He will judge me.
C: Cornelius, when you imagine your maker judging you, what kind of judge is he?
P: He's a just judge.
C: Is he like any just judge? Or is there something special about him?
P: He's merciful as well.
C: What will this just and merciful judge say to you when you meet him?
P: He'll say I'm innocent (smiling, then weeping).

As if unpredictably catching some fish, Cornelius' images of death became transformed into im-

ages of his creator blessing him with justice and mercy. Others like him respond with surprise and gratitude when they discover that God is revealed through people and events, giving meaning to their lives in moments of doubt, confusion, and pain.

INQUIRY ABOUT LOVE

After a surprising catch of fish, in the Gospel story, Jesus and his friends shared a meal together. It is usually after patients have talked thoughtfully about their discovery of God's love for them that they and the chaplain share the Eucharist. Then the chaplain may talk with the patient about significant loves in the patient's life. Just as Jesus questioned Peter about his love ("Simon, son of John, do you love me?"), the chaplain asks the central questions: "Do you love? Are you a loving person? Are you happy to have people with you? Are you happy to be alive?" These questions can draw forth fear, anger, silence, evasion, embarrassment, and tears.

In the course of that same afternoon, the chaplain asked Cornelius:

C: When you say God will declare you innocent, how do you feel about your children?
P: I love them very much.
C: And your wife?
P: I love her too.

Jesus further exhorted Peter to "Feed my sheep." Cornelius responded to the chaplain's invitation to feed the people in his life by calling his wife into his room and asking her to forgive him for anything he had ever done to her.

It is only after patients have expressed their loves that the chaplain can be straightforward about future events. Jesus said to Peter, "You will stretch out your hands and somebody will take you where you would rather not go." Similarly, the chaplain may need to discuss candidly how disease may be taking people where they would rather not go. The chaplain and Cornelius reflected on Jesus' dialogue with Peter, and they discussed the specific options that were available to Cornelius as he prepared for his meeting with his maker.

The chaplain did not say goodbye to Cornelius until he had given him some encouragement. Jesus commanded Peter to "follow me." The chaplain exhorted Cornelius: "Follow the way that brings you peace of mind. Follow the way that brings you peace of heart. Go where the deepest and most authentic of your desires are leading you."

Is this paradigm too much to ask of a pastoral minister? Not if the initiative is from the Lord, who has invested the minister with the intelligence to use and the power to transcend professional technique and expertise. In wise, delicate, sacramental gestures of mercy, justice, and compassion, God

> **Cornelius' images of death became transformed into images of his creator blessing him with justice and mercy**

acts, through the pastoral minister, for the purpose of giving eternal life.

LISTENING IS GRACE

The pastoral minister in the hospital often brings to people a health-stimulating peace of mind and heart. Throughout this article I have focused on four facets of the pastor's power: (1) the power to communicate God's forgiveness; (2) the power to enhance patients' ability to respond to God; (3) the power to encourage patients in their prayer; and (4) the power to remind patients who God is for them in their lives.

This pastoral power comes from the pastor's own experience of Jesus. The pastor's own sense of forgiveness, his ability to respond, his prayer, and his self-image are continually formed by Jesus and his father. It is a formation by means of grace, the grace appropriate for the pastor's ministry. The grace enjoyed by pastors is none other than the ability to listen with finely tuned sensitivity to the stirrings of the Spirit within human hearts. Listening to the Spirit is the grace that renders the pastor's charism a unique gift.

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MATURING IN WISDOM AND GRACE

THOMAS LAY, S.J.

braham Maslow once voiced his conviction that the study of psychology was mainly concerned with "the tricks we use to avoid the anxiety of absolute novelty by making believe that the future will be like the past." Our own contemporary experience of a constantly accelerating rate of change makes it very expensive for us to purchase that piece of make-believe. Since change is so pervasive and frequently very painful, its role in our lives and our attitude toward it merit careful and prayerful consideration.

For a Christian, serious meditation on experience always warrants consulting God's word in Scripture. When the subject of meditation is the experience of change, we do not have to search far in sacred writings to find suitable content. Indeed, the very first chapter of Genesis presents us with an account of primordial chaos transformed into a created cosmos. We might profitably linger awhile over these first pages of the Bible. As we do so, let us keep in mind the principle of interpreting Scripture that reminds us that this word is not merely an historical account enlightening us about the past; it also addresses us in ways helpful for our salvation now.

Frequently, in retreats and conversations while traveling, people speak to me in such phrases as, "My world collapsed," "I had to make a new life for myself," and "It all came apart; I just don't know if I can ever get it together again." In varying degrees these expressions voice the uncertainty and fear we feel when our personal foundations shift or give way beneath us. Such a situation may be illuminated for us by meditatively listening to the passage about creation in Genesis. Although stressed and twisted by personal displacements, we are at a privileged moment in our life journey, for notice is being served that we are called to respond as a co-creator with God in the structuring of our own lives and history.

REDISCOVERY INVITED

As we contemplate our situation as evolving creatures, Genesis gives us the first assurance that God is present in these times of endings and new beginnings. The void and the darkness of the yet-to-be-formed being are not impervious to God's power. It is from the void and the darkness that order and light emerge. Our experience of change invites us to rediscover at ever deeper levels the working of this power within us that brings order out of chaos.

Often when struggling to make some major change in life, whether elected or enforced, com-

panions have remarked to me that if they truly had faith, or really were mature, they would be able to do this so much better. "Better" almost always meant quicker, if not instantly. Yet when our Scriptures present the Almighty One creating, they make it clear that he does not do so in the blink of an eye. Creating takes time. Even the Lord had to take time or give time to put a world together.

A lovely counterpoint to the Lord's work of creating is his constant affirmation of its goodness, even in its incomplete and unfinished state. "God saw that it was good" is a refrain repeated six times within the first thirty-one verses of Genesis. How often are we able to affirm the goodness of that incomplete and unfinished part of creation, our very selves, that God's power is calling into being?

We can come to value and appreciate a work through an awareness of the true cost of its production. Sensitivity to the process and demands of creation is a prerequisite to enhancing our appreciation of and respect for our own creatureliness. In the Genesis account the Lord pays a price for his creative effort, and that price is fatigue. "He rested on the seventh day because of all the work he had been doing" (Gn 2:2). This sabbatical rest, however, is not an enforced or begrudged bed rest. It is not a resented deficiency, as though the ideal would be to keep on working and never stop. It is rather the paradigmatic experience of the holiness of the Sabbath: "God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on that day he had rested after all his work of creating" (Gn 2:3).

Jesus reminded us that the Sabbath was made for us. It is meant to contribute to our holiness, our wholeness. Part of the increased valuing of our own life, which can come from reflective and freely accepted rest, is a constructive assessment of the energy, effort, and discipline that our responsible participation in creation requires. This assessment can engender a life-enhancing respect for the project of our own humanity. Folk wisdom instructs us, "easy come, easy go." The pretense of glossy and slick commercials that display beautiful people, effortlessly glamorous and clever, devalues the work and pain that have brought us to our current state of unfinished creation. It may be true aesthetically that art hides art; in the creativity of our own lives, however, such strategy is a deceptive subterfuge that masks the burdens and demands that responsible interaction with God's creative word places upon us.

ADULTS STILL DEPENDENT

Until recently, much was obscure about the period of life broadly referred to as adulthood. Although we were familiar with the stages and processes of childhood and adolescence, adulthood was often perceived as a rather static and finished achievement. Indeed, the very definition of the word "adult" suggests the completion of the growing process, for we say "grown-up." Not the least of the difficulties with this model of adulthood is the added burden of guilt or inadequacy that the reluctant admission of our own incompleteness or unfinishedness imposes on us. The current literature on the developmental phases of the adult years gives us permission to own without embarrassment the areas of our lives where we experience our incompleteness most acutely. From the experience of incompleteness and the needs that arise from being unfinished, we move to a saving truth about ourselves: we are dependent on God's creative power. Further exploration of the adult experience of incompleteness may clarify the dynamics by which we may come to a more truthful and life-giving identity of our vocation to creatureliness.

Much of the current literature on adulthood is concerned with the process and stages of development. At the risk of oversimplifying, we might think of such adult stages as early adulthood, middle adulthood, and late adulthood. Each stage has its specific tasks and obligations. Early adulthood is a time of settling in and responding to the demands of a more independent and autonomous life. It means selecting an occupation, considering marriage or single life, beginning a family, or joining a community. These are heavy demands requiring much energy and goal-directed behavior with little time for subtleties and prolonged weighing of consequences. Dreams and ideals, sketched simply in bold strokes, are needed to energize the constructive work of this period. Well into the thirties and even mid-forties the pursuit of these goals with trial-and-error revisions occupy center stage in our lives.

Middle-adulthood, embracing the forties and the fifties, is a time of reassessment. Its retrospective moments include a stock-taking comparison of the dreams and ideals of early adulthood with the manifest realities of the middle portion of the journey. The experience is often chastening and painful because the emerging self-knowledge requires personal redefinition. Fantasies of self, others, and the world may be jettisoned in favor of more realistic appraisals. Energy that may initially be lost by the seeming failure of our earlier aspirations can be replenished by the vital appeal of a reconsidered self-knowledge, framed by a more modest assessment of reality. Carl Rogers, reflecting on his work with people in personal distress, once remarked that "the facts are always friendly." He elaborated this by saying that in any area of life, being closer to the truth can never be ultimately an unsatisfying thing. From our Christian perspective, the gradual acceptance of this personal truth leads to our salvation.

The years of later adulthood, roughly from the mid-fifties on, are years with a rich possibility for

ADULT STAGES

EARLY ADULTHOOD
Independent and Autonomous Life

MIDDLE ADULTHOOD
Reassessment

LATER ADULTHOOD
Reconciliation and Growth

one, depends in large measure on the quality of reconciliation and peacemaking we are able to bring to ourselves and others. This inner work must precede our relations with others and our world.

By midlife, the fruits of all the seasons of our life are present within us, either as harvest or potential. I remember one time waiting for an elevator, when an elderly Jesuit approached from a distance, just as it was ready to move. Reluctantly, I held the elevator and later reflected on the inner impatience and resistance I experienced at this momentary delay. It became clear to me that some of my resistance and impatience was unmistakably directed toward the old man within me, as he even now begins to demand his place. Children can also evoke uneasiness in me, because I know how easily my best-laid plans can turn to shambles at the whim of their playfulness. This resistance too, I believe, carries echoes of the child still within me who has a potential for thwarting some of my best attempts to get ahold of my life and my time. Part of the work of reconciliation lies in becoming willing to deal respectfully and appreciatively with these realities.

In addition to a reconciliation of youth and age, we must also come to terms with the destructiveness that has shot through our very efforts to be creative. We are challenged to do this without indifference on the one hand or debilitating self-hatred on the other. The bounty that comes from this demanding and often painful work is an enriched appreciation of the intimate kinship we share with all of humanity in its painful struggle to choose life over and over again, even after so many fearful meetings with death. Having met the potential for destructiveness within ourselves, we are more realistic and less discouraged when our attempts to do good are less than unqualified successes, or are even total failures.

The semantics of reconciliation are rooted in images of restoring friendship, reuniting, and establishing communion and harmony. These images speak to the deepest yearnings of our hearts and prompt us to ask ourselves whether there is still a more comprehensive reconciliation we might effect? If so, we may be able to release a new power within our lives, for one of the most satisfying effects of any reconciliation is the relaxing and constructive flow of energy formerly bottled up in anger and resentment.

The most difficult and the most comprehensive reconciliation involves overcoming the resistance we bring to the demand that we choose life, a limited, imperfect life beyond our control and ultimately not of our making. This ultimate reconciliation demands making friends with all that is human. We should not wonder that we find it difficult and discover resistances within ourselves, if only we recall that our first parents flatly rejected this vocation to human creaturehood.

reconciliation and growth in communion with ourselves and others. This requires, however, farewell to a childhood innocence and replacement of this naive self-perception with an acknowledgement, both responsible and forgiving, of the evil and destructiveness that have inevitably accompanied the assertiveness we brought to the task of our lives.

CENTRAL TASK EVIDENT

Reconciliation might be the richest rubric under which to consider the period of the later years, for in a sense these years recapitulate and contain all that has gone before. Whether it is a relatively peaceful containment or an unsatisfying, dissonant

ASSENT TO REBIRTH

Earlier, we reflected on creation as it is presented in the first book of our Scriptures. A creation theme also emerges in the last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation. In this instance, a new creation—a new heaven and a new earth—is described. God's word is again heard: "Now I am making the whole of creation new" (Rv 21:5). Scripture speaks of Jesus as the firstborn of a new creation and calls us to a similarly creative rebirth in the course of our own human journey. One condition of that rebirth lies in our assent to the emergence within ourselves of the creative power and purposes of Another. Traditional Catholic piety has looked to Mary for instruction in eliciting this assent. The image of Mary as found in tradition may be helpful for our current reflections.

Many Christmas card images of Mary, placid and serene as she receives the message of the angel, do little justice to the densely packed scriptural passage depicting the Annunciation. The scene presents Mary at a time of passage in her own life. The impact of the unexpected turn of events and the content of the angel's message leave Mary fearful and confused. It is a time of questioning, as she strives to understand what is happening. Only after she searches for understanding and only after she has borne her fear and dealt with her confusion is she able to affirm her readiness for this new creation emerging within her. Her last words in the passage, not her first, signal her acquiescence to the Lord's creative initiative. Her readiness expresses a considered and responsible "Yes," not the superficial acceptance of a compulsive optimist.

Our faith allows us to see that Mary's assent freed a power within her that gave birth to God's own Son. This was only the beginning. Traditional Catholic theology has recognized a subsequent fruition of this creative power by ascribing to her motherhood a universalized role beyond her relationship to Jesus and her own time. A graced intuition of God's creative purposes led the church to confess that Mary is the mother of all. The vocation at work within Mary was to make her a blessing for all generations.

If Mary is the perfect image of the Christian, we must all be open to a similar purpose at work within our own lives. To realize that our lives will always unfold in stages and seasons is already to know that we will never attain absolute perfection or wholeness. Moreover, division and sinfulness will be part of our experience until we die.

> The context of each failure carries within it the seeds of a larger purpose that has eluded our own intentions

COMPASSION FROM SHARING

Acknowledgement of the evil and destructiveness that have affected our building of our own lives need not lead to either complacency or despair. Rather, it is the painful juxtaposition of the polarities of creativity and destructiveness at the heart of our experience that brings home to us our need to forgive and be forgiven. The compassion born of this need is not an innervating, aesthetic savoring of "the human condition." It nurtures within us bonds that are sensitive to human solidarity, because it originates in experiences shared with others. Acceptance of our limited creaturehood unbinds a hitherto-constricted energy and makes available to us a new power. This power, arising in those educated in compassion and chastened by painfully acquired self-knowledge, is the power of the Creator.

God's power is at work in our lives, overcoming our resistances all along. At every stage of adult development, our life projects and scenarios know failure. But the context of each failure carries within it the seeds of a larger purpose that has eluded our own intentions. This larger, creative purpose has as its goal not only our own good but the good of all.

Blessedness, the good of all, is God's own purpose. As it becomes through the stages of our lives more radically our own purpose, we can know and savor something of the creature's delight expressed by Mary in her Magnificat. Even now, in piecemeal fashion, it is granted to us to find that which motivates, however obscurely, every human venture and journey we embark upon—union with our Creator.

Collaboration for Tomorrow's Ministry

Rose Marie Ruffle, S.P.

In striving to meet the needs of the church and society, men and women religious are becoming more aware of the need for collaboration among congregations that share a common concern for ministry. Religious are highly qualified and competent ministers but in many instances are unable to secure positions. In some cases the positions do not exist; in other circumstances the individual has not had the opportunity to communicate with the proper source of placement.

Seriously reflecting on this situation, the General Council of the Adrian Dominican Sisters invited representatives of various religious congregations to discuss closer collaboration, in order to increase and improve the services these congregations offer to the people of God. The congregations represented at the meeting, held in December 1978, were generally selected according to size, geographic distribution of their members, and the open placement reflected in their ministerial policies.

The congregations initially involved enrolled 15,000 men and women; the largest percentage of their active members served in the continental United States, but members also ministered to needs in Western Europe, Latin America, Africa, and Taiwan. They brought years of experience and rich educational backgrounds to the care of the poor, the sick, and those deprived of education or of some other human right. The members were uniformly committed to the responsible promotion of a more just and humane society.

These religious groups felt that sharing training, experience, and human potential was the best hope of carrying out the gospel message. The decision to move to collaborative efforts was a philosophical as well as a practical one. Aging members and declining numbers had prompted religious groups to study ways in which they could maximize their resources for service, but the collaboration was also a response to Christ's call to search out and respond to human need where it exists. The 1978 meeting resulted in the establishment of the Ministry Resource Center (3920 N. Lawndale Avenue, Chicago, IL 60618).

GOALS OF THE CENTER

The creators of the Ministry Resource Center had three goals in mind: (1) to share research on present ministerial needs; (2) to analyze future trends as they affected ministry; and (3) to design an ongoing process that would enable each congregation to maintain its autonomy in ministry and placement policies while collaborating with other congregations in the gathering and interpretation of relevant data.

Sharing research on present ministerial needs would give answers to questions such as: What needs are presently not met by religious congregations? Not met by anyone? Not likely to be met? What resources do we have to respond to these needs? Who? How?

In analyzing future trends, we hoped that sufficient information with comparative data would enable us to address such questions as: Where are we going in our ministerial response? What are the evolving trends in service to particular geographic areas and to particular social, economic, and ethnic groups? What indications of movement from traditional to new ministries are there? What preparations exist or are needed for a futuristic thrust in ministry?

A data processing system was instituted to store, retrieve, and analyze available ministerial information. This system furnishes current information on ministerial openings. Future plans for the system include the possibility of identifying the potential of religious to meet needs, assessing church presence in an area, foreseeing new ministerial approaches, and recognizing growing areas of need.

STATEMENTS OF BELIEF

When the congregations began exploring possibilities for ministerial collaboration, they brought

the insights gleaned from fifteen years of reflection and renewal. They exchanged statements of their congregations' philosophies and goals; they shared their articulation of ministerial purposes and commitment; and they discovered the fundamental similarity—the common vision and dedication. The result of this discovery was the formulation of six statements of belief:

- Our ministry should be rooted in the one mission of Jesus.
- Our options in ministry ought to provide opportunities to respond to the call of justice and peace.
- Our ministry should enable the emergence of leadership on all levels.
- Our ministry must promote and respect the dignity of all persons.
- Our options in ministry ought to be oriented to current and future needs.
- Our ministry must reflect our concern for good stewardship of total resources.

One goal of the Center is to have a researcher in each of the nine apostolic regions of the U.S. as designated by the Glenmary Research Office. The first research office of the Ministry Resource Center opened in September 1981 in Birmingham, Alabama, with Brother John D. Olsen, C.F.X., as Director of Research. Brother Olsen's region is the South and South Appalachian area, covering ten states and twenty-four dioceses. Monthy reports to the membership show areas of greatest need in which religious can serve, and indicate potential new ministries in this geographic location and creative approaches to traditional ministries as well.

Currently, plans are underway for the opening of a second research office. The research committee will soon present options to the Board of Directors of the Ministry Resource Center with possible implementation in the fall of 1984.

FACING YEARS AHEAD

As we look back over the past sixty years, there seems to be an ebb and flow in our American decades. According to futurist Dr. Leon Martel, we "roared through the twenties, were depressed in the thirties, fought and recovered in the forties, slept through the fifties, suffered and soared in the sixties, and slowed in the seventies."

If the cycle continues, the eighties should be a decade of experiment and excitement. Responding to the challenges facing us all in this decade, the Ministry Resource Center will attempt to offer the social support system so essential to Christian ministry and the future of religious life.

Father Theodore Hesburgh has said that "while our material resources may dwindle, our traditional energy sources may run dry, there is one in-

AMERICAN DECADES
The Past Sixty Years

ROARED THROUGH THE 20s

FOUGHT IN THE 40s

SLEPT THROUGH THE 50s

SOARED IN THE 60s

SLOWED IN THE 70s

EXPERIMENT IN THE 80s

exhaustible and always renewable resource: our ingenuity, our imagination, our knowledge and technology, and especially, our common human aspirations to create a new world." It is our hope that the Ministry Resource Center may serve as a catalyst for the new world by drawing on the resources of its members. The best part of the human venture may indeed still lie ahead.

The Ministry Resource Center will continue to work toward implementation of the recommendations of the Second Vatican Council. Integrating the thinking of both the very pessimistic and optimistic futurists, we expect to find new answers to our questions and new solutions to our problems in relation to the fulfillment of human needs.

By sending researchers into the places where people live and toil, the Center will hear the needs of the most abandoned, the unnoticed, and the oppressed. Together with these people, we will examine their needs carefully to assure ourselves that we are responding to those that are most serious, even if less apparent.

As our religious congregations have moved away from institutionalized ministries, and as the number of our members has decreased, it is not

The best part of the human venture may indeed still lie ahead

uncommon to find that more religious are living and working alone. This may be caused in part by the highly specialized nature of the work. Our Center can help to overcome and prevent isolationism. We are expecting not to increase the number of religious but rather to expand communication among and between member congregations. In turn, this may well lead to greater inter-congregational cooperation.

The Ministry Resource Center plans to include lay persons and diocesan priests among its members. The Center will be seen, we hope, as a service to dioceses as they seek to meet the needs of the local church. We feel that part of the future we are creating through collaborative efforts will be the developing and modeling of new structures to support and set free the prophetic ministries currently emerging. It is our hope that as old and useless religious structures die, our Center may offer social support to the new forms of ministry so essential to the church's fulfillment of her mission.

Member Congregations of Ministry Resource Center

Dominican Sisters
Adrian, Michigan

Dominican Sisters
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Dominican Sisters
Sinsinawa, Wisconsin (Southeast Province)

Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration
La Crosse, Wisconsin

Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters
Monroe, Wisconsin

Marianists
Dayton, Ohio

School Sisters of St. Francis
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Sisters of Charity, B.V.M.
Dubuque, Iowa

Sisters of Charity of Nazareth
Nazareth, Kentucky

Sisters of Humility of Mary
Ottumwa, Iowa

Sisters of the Living Word
Chicago, Illinois

Sisters of Mercy of the Union
Detroit, Michigan

Sisters of Providence
St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana

Xaverian Brothers
Kensington, Maryland

REDREAMING

James Torrens, S.J.

I

I am set down abruptly
foot slaps the earth
among sharp watchers
the picture snappers
and me without a cover
to run on crying out
before the terrible strict judge

who hurries me up pitched streets
to the booming stadium
a late arrival, frantic
to know, what action?
whose applause?

am swept up to its rim
to be handed down
bench by bench
through the loud judges
tumbled, hunting as I turn
one true defender's face

in vain. for sentencing
am rolled onto the open field's palm
to stand up before officials
in striped robes, three with their
beards, identical stern
looks, as on the Mission ceiling.
eyes on me, heads consult
for penalties

II

hold it. awake yourself.
sit up. relax now and
breathe deeply. ready?
settle back

reverse the spool to start.
get there on time. no grandstands

admit familiars only,
pleasant or difficult.
scatter them like shavings,
group them then.
leave a place everywhere,
just one. turn them your way,
brightening. form them
like Brueghel's children into games,
tasks, units of volunteers

you in their figures know
at once what impact stunting
has, or slacking off, close
following or leading or sheer
hanging on

whatever circle you are handed
to, somehow one face
peers forth, chides, heartens
and you know

That great salesman Paul was not given to soft soaping. Jew that he was, his announcement of the Good News also made clear the serious consequences of believing, with more than a trace of the Hasidic teaching that God is not nice, God is no uncle, but rather like an earthquake; his effect is revolutionary, also quite overwhelming.

One of the articles of faith that Paul passed on to the early converts was that we will all have to give account. "We make it our aim to please the Lord," he wrote to the troublesome Corinthians, "for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive good or evil, according to what he has done in the body" (2 Cor 5:9–10). This long view, or scenario of the final times, came to Paul through the oral versions of the teaching of Jesus. Paul indeed drew the lesson from it that Jesus himself commends in the parables and presses upon us in the Our Father, that we had better not think harshly of others if we wish the face of God to turn kindly upon us. Our being godlike depends upon our generous judgments.

Paul, in his letters, speaks often with recognition that the eye of God is upon him, the *ojo de Dios* caught so colorfully (and sensitively) in the Mexican household design but shown to us by the psalmist in Psalm 139 as deeply penetrating: "Before a word is even on my tongue, you, O Lord, know it thoroughly." Thus Paul told the Corinthians, "It matters little to me whether you or any human court pass judgment on me. I do not even pass judgment on myself. I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted" (1 Cor 4:3–4). What Paul says here is later developed by Bishop Baldwin of Canterbury in words that anticipate modern psychology; there is truly little new under the sun.

We do not always perceive our thoughts as they really are. . . . for there are certain imitations of true virtues as also of vices which play tricks with the heart and bedazzle the mind's vision. . . . This is part of our wretchedness and ignorance, causing us anguish and anxiety. (Divine Office, Friday, 9th Week in Ordinary Time)

THE JUDGMENT

We often catch an admonitory tone in Paul. He dealt with situations calling for a sharp word: the Thessalonians were tempted to slack off before Christ's imminent coming, the Corinthians were torn by factions and inflated by pretensions, the fickle Galatians let the old Jewish practices appeal to them. He told the Galatians, "Do not be fooled. No one can pull the wool over God's eyes" (Gal 6:7).

LOVE INSPIRES WARNING

No question about it, Paul presumed to teach the Way in specifics. The desire to be found in Christ impelled him to spell out for everyone the implications of being "a new creature." When he saw his genuinely beloved converts going off the road, he felt his own salvation depend upon telling them, Watch out! A great love motivates him; a salutary sting sometimes comes out of him; it is a difficult combination.

The combination may have been difficult for young bishop Timothy. It is possible that Timothy found himself intimidated by this powerful figure (an uncle more imposing than that in the Hasidic proverb!). It is also possible that, responding oppositely to Paul, he found himself not so much energized to assume responsibility as daunted by thoughts of the divine scrutiny. Paul wrote with an obvious and warm concern for Timothy, and an appreciation of all his gifts. In the two letters he sent to him about his ministry and mission, he strove to remind him of the purity of the gospel and to fill him with its encouragements.

> I remind you to revitalize the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of servile fear but a spirit of power and love and wise counsel. Do not be ashamed then of testifying to Our Lord. (2 Tm 1:6–8)

Paul's effort to bolster Timothy is heavy on imperatives. "I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom, to preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and teaching" (2 Tm 4:1–2). This sentence tells us a great deal about the speaker. Paul, in chains in Rome, is fighting his own discouragement over converts who have fallen off from the faith, and he is conscious of the account he himself will soon be giving. "The time of my departure has come" (2 Tm 4:6) he tells Timothy, in words that today ring familiarly,

> I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the just judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but to all who have looked forward to his appearing. (2 Tm 4:6–8)

What telling lines these are, almost the last we have from Paul. Is he boasting, at the threshold of death? No, rather, after years of self-examination, he rests confident in a merciful judgment. Paul is nothing if not consistent; we can remember his earlier flight of confidence, inspired by the line in Isaiah, "Who dares contend with me?" (Is 50:8). "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Rom 8:32). He rests his case on the Lord's advocacy.

The striking passage from Timothy, where Paul looks ahead to his judgment, comes to rest on a crucial point, the message that God will be bountiful to "all who have been in love with his epiphany," as it says if translated strictly. We have, in our freer version, the true definition of Christians: "those who have looked forward to his appearing."

When Our Lord shows himself, we know it will be as the One we have been seeing all along, he who is present in the down and out, the misjudged, the marginal, the failures, in addition to the people right next door and all our brothers and sisters of the Eucharistic assembly. It is Jesus whose spirit of kindness, patience, and zeal has somehow been inhabiting our thoughts. Attending to him, we will have had a role in preparing his full-dress appearance. And his full-dress appearance means, of course, us with him, not separate and solo, but as living and integral parts, fully recognizable at last.

BOOK REVIEWS

People of the Lie: The Hope for Healing Human Evil, by M. Scott Peck, M.D. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983. 269 pp. $14.95.

Scott Peck's earlier (1978) book, *The Road Less Traveled*, has been a consistent best seller in its paperback edition. A psychiatrist in private practice, Dr. Peck underwent a nondenominational Christian baptism in 1980. His commitment to Christ is overtly and unapologetically evident in his new book.

Catholic readers had reservations about his treatment of grace in the earlier book and about certain positions taken in it (such as that *if* it were therapeutically indicated—an unlikely prospect, he insisted—he might have sexual relations with a patient). Nonetheless, his realistic treatment of love, his insistence on discipline as a prerequisite to growth, and his integration of religion into daily life were admirably articulated in an eloquent way that combined gentleness and encouragement with a no-nonsense honesty and expectation of hard work. The book's popularity was well deserved, and a new work by its author is examined with careful interest.

People of the Lie is a curious book, obviously an earnest effort by the author to come to grips with the great problem of evil, particularly as it has been concretized for him in his professional practice and his experiences in Vietnam. He terms his book a dangerous one and urges that it be handled with care. I think he is right, and that his call to caution is warranted. My reasons are somewhat different from his.

In brief, Peck's thesis is that a number of difficult patients are untreatable. And, more than untreatable, these are understandable only by seeing them as "evil." For them, he hypothesizes the possibility and desirability of a new psychiatric diagnosis, "malignant narcissism," characterized by an abrogation of responsibility, destructive scapegoating behavior, excessive intolerance to criticism, pronounced concern with a public image, a denial of negative motivations, and an intellectual deviousness. For the most severe among these cases, he posits that the only remedy may be deliverance or exorcism. The book is thus the marriage of psychiatry and religion with a vengeance.

Therein lie the book's flaws and its danger. The marriage is premature; the turf is confused, and the proper questions have not yet been raised, let alone answered. The cases he describes (for example, parents who saw nothing wrong in giving to a younger son as a Christmas gift the gun that an older son had used to commit suicide) do indeed raise revulsion in us. In each case, the personae are difficult and their effect on others often seriously damaging.

Difficult cases do present themselves in practice: not every case is curable, and perhaps few problems are more vexing to psychiatrists and physicians in general than patients who cannot or will not hear the advice being given them and cannot or will not put it into action. I am not convinced that pinning on patients a diagnosis of "evil" or "malignant narcissism" will forward our quest for understanding of their human psychopathology. Neither am I convinced that a remedy of deliverance or exorcism will add to our therapeutic armamentarium.

What evidence does Peck supply? He estimates that about 95% of the cases presented to psychiatrists can be explained in traditional categories. He states that he has personally been involved with two cases that he believes were genuine possession. However, he gives no details of these cases, claiming to be concerned for the privacy of the victims. This concern, although in itself laudable and ethical, leaves us without evidence, thus stripping the book of any claim to be taken seriously on the scientific level. The only other support he cites for possession is Malachi Martin's *Hostages to the Devil*, a book without any shred of claim to be taken seriously as a scientific work and which Richard Woods, O.P., characterized theologically as "romantic, individualistic, antiintellectual, dualistic, and Jansenistic . . . a nightmarish fantasy of unrepentant Irish Manichaeism."

People of the Lie fails us both scientifically and theologically. I am concerned about the book on several grounds. I think there is a good possibility that some people who have the delusional guilt that often comes with depression will use the book to further flagellate themselves. Others may too cavalierly apply the label "evil" to those whom they do not understand or do not agree with. Some involved in providing spiritual direction or counseling, well meaning but inadequately trained, will apply the label to a number of cases better understood (although perhaps as yet incompletely) from a psychiatric or neurological perspective.

It has taken centuries for medicine to separate itself from religion and to develop its scientific method of careful, painstaking investigation and hypothesis testing. Application of rigorous method to biblical study and to moral theology has brought similar advances, often in the realization that documents as well as people and their motivations and actions are generally not as simple as they first appear.

The problem of evil remains one of the mysteries of our life and universe. Human motivation, human freedom, human action, and human responsibility remain fertile fields for investigation by both religion and psychiatry, and scholars in one field may indeed work collaboratively with experts in the other. But premature answers and easy "fixes" are a snare and a delusion and no substitute, however well motivated, for rigorous methodology and carefully documented work.

—Jon J. O'Brien, S.J., D.O.

Alcoholic Priests: A Sociological Study, by Andrew A. Sorensen. New York: The Seabury Press, 1976. 181 pp. $8.95.

Andrew A. Sorensen, Associate Professor of Preventive Medicine in Community Health at the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry, is an ordained minister in the United Presbyterian Church. This book grew out of his dissertation for a Ph.D. in Sociology at Yale University. It is a study of drinking among Roman Catholic and Protestant Episcopal priests in the U.S. and includes a history of drinking among American clergy from Colonial times through temperance movements and the emergence in recent decades of an awareness of the dimensions of the problem. The methodology used was a cross-sectional survey of both alcoholic and nonalcoholic clergy. It was hypothesized that the alcoholics could be distinguished from the nonalcoholics with respect to a number of relevant attributes. Each respondent was asked in a private interview a number of questions about major periods in his life: his early childhood, adolescence, early adulthood, and his entire career in the priesthood. The premise underlying such a wide scope was that no single chronological period in the life of any given individual is likely to offer an exhaustive explanation of why he became an alcoholic. The questionnaire used in the study is not included in the book, but it is noted that copies of the questionnaire may be obtained through the National Auxiliary Publications Service, care of Microfiche Publications, 440 Park Avenue South, New York, New York, 10016.

Several reasons were given for including only Roman Catholic and Protestant Episcopal clergy: (1) these churches were never substantially involved in the temperance movement and therefore have greater tolerance of drinking and alcoholism on the part of both laymen and clergy; (2) generally speaking, these churches do not accept abstinence as a virtue; (3) the clergy of these churches tend to look at the priesthood as a lifelong commitment and remain active in the ministry even though they may become alcoholics at some point in their careers.

A sample of alcoholic priests (65 in number) was identified by a reputational methodology that permitted each respondent to recommend another priest to be interviewed. A group of 56 nonalcoholic priests serving in Worcester County, Massachusetts, was selected by randomly choosing a representative sample of parishes and religious communities.

The conclusions reached concerning background and vocational selection indicate that the alcoholic priests are more likely than their nonalcoholic counterparts to come from Irish families. However, the social class of parents has no predictive utility as to whether someone will be alcoholic. Persons who experience great upward social mobility are no more likely to experience alcoholism than those who do not. Place of birth and birth order do not seem to be correlated with alcoholism among these priests. Significant differences are seen between alcoholics and nonalcoholics when the high school and college years of these men are examined. The alcoholic priests generally lived at home, in families where the adult males drank heavily, but where children were forbidden to drink, whereas their nonalcoholic counterparts were more likely to be in controlled environments where such ambivalence toward drinking was not evident.

The author discovered that a significantly higher proportion of alcoholics have master's and doctoral degrees. One of the principal foci of this study is the relationship of alcoholism to the career development of priests. The author concludes that alcoholics have experienced much more downward mobility in their priestly careers than have the nonalcoholics. But the fact that nearly half the alcoholics' careers could be characterized by upward mobility indicates that they can achieve promotion within their respective ecclesiastical systems. However, those who have had few or no drinking episodes in the recent past are much more likely to be promoted.

Sorensen found that alcoholic priests are likely to be older men who live in large cities, manifest personalized need for power, have at least one Irish parent, and have moved frequently. Nonalcoholics, on the other hand, are likely to be younger men who live in medium-sized cities, express socialized need for power, report that neither parent is Irish, and have not moved often.

From this survey there emerges the conviction that a real conspiracy of silence exists today concerning this problem, and that it must be torn aside if priests are to receive the help they so desperately need. It is a sobering thought that members of the alcoholic's family (whether it be a biological family or its social equivalent), by shielding or covering for the problem drinker, may serve to accentuate the dysfunctional aspects of alcoholism rather than help restore the alcoholic to an improved level of social functioning.

Sorensen's work clearly indicates that as social institutions, the churches have yet to deal effectively with a human problem that has serious spiritual implications for the alcoholic clergyman and for all members of the church community. This work would be helpful background material for diocesan personnel boards and governing bodies determining the development of religious personnel.

—**Daniel E. Jennings, D.S.W.**

Social Justice Ministry: Foundations and Concerns, by Paul Steidl-Meier, S. J. New York: Le Jacq Publishing, 1984. 344 pp. $19.

In the first part of *Social Justice Ministry,* after reviewing the ferment in the church today over ministry, Father Steidl-Meier describes an overall framework of analysis and methodology. Envisioning the human being in terms of "relational" theology and employing a diagnostic method, he sets out the conceptual foundations that underlie the notion of social ministry. He then clarifies how the notion of social experience may be distinguished from either individual or interpersonal experience. After presenting the elements of a notion of justice that serve as criteria for analyzing social relations, the author discusses the relation between social ministry and some basic elements of a Christian theology of history. He devotes several chapters to spirituality and the organizational aspects of social ministry.

In the second part of the book, Steidl-Meier discusses the main spheres of concern of social ministry and the general problems found in each: the church's relation to the civil authority system, to the market system, and to cultural persuasion systems. Besides these three systems, which generally constitute the area of relations between church and society, he discusses the family and its relations to the state, to the economic system, and to the various cultural systems. Lastly, he takes up questions of poverty and development. Steidl-Meier regards each of these spheres as a clear instance of the problem of achieving "right relations," or relations of justice and peace.

There are too many good things in this masterful book to single them all out. This is simply the best interdisciplinary work on social justice ministry—critically realistic and authentically practical—anyone has produced. Steidl-Meier cogently argues that the ministry to transform social relations into incarnate expressions of the wisdom and grace of the Spirit is most properly the work of the entire church. His magisterial work is of immense practical potential for the radical transformation of Christians through their ministry to human development in the social sphere. *Social Justice Ministry* is praxis theology at its best. Steidl-Meier's critical sociohistorical method suggests a new structure and content for theology, where it becomes fused with spirituality: the following of Christ and solidarity in Christ with one's neighbor, a process in which a people grow in wisdom and grace. Steidl-Meier's praxis theology starts with historical experience as expressed in memory and narration (stories) and in the quest of those seeking to understand the theological meaning of that experience. Stories and symbols render ultimate reality concrete, and so provide the grounds for theological reflection, which articulates the meaning of the end-state as expressed in them and specifies the types of behavior—the moral virtues—consistent with the end-state. Religion's view of ultimate meaning and reality (end-state) confers meaning on the present. Thus, patterns of behavior are either legitimated as virtue or denounced prophetically as vice in terms of ultimate reality as mediated by the religious tradition.

Steidl-Meier challenges his readers to reflect critically and prayerfully on the stories and symbols of the Christian tradition for an authentic interpretation of the tradition itself. For example, some see the story of the Exodus and the symbol of the cross as a demand for liberation and the willingness to undergo the suffering that marks that struggle. Or they may be interpreted as the journey of withdrawal from the fleshpots of the world and the consequent crucifying of the flesh by continual abnegation. There are competing interpretations that illustrate the dilemma of being in the world but not of it. What is at issue in Catholic circles today regarding social evil is the transformation of the tradition itself. Steidl-Meier affirms that no particular theology or interpretation of religious story and symbol is ever neutral regarding the social order. What is taking place in the Catholic Church amounts to theological reflection on the very adequacy of systems of interpretation of Christian story and symbol.

As the best available account of the relationship between the spiritual and social spheres in practice and theory, this book should be required reading for all Christian leaders, theologians, educators, spiritual directors, and counselors.

—**John Navone, S. J.**

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A NEW VIEW OF ANXIETY

James J. Gill, S.J., M.D.

If there is any single emotion that qualifies as one of the best blessings and also one of the worst scourges in human existence, it is anxiety. The same multiform effect that can stimulate an outstanding operatic or astronautical performance, a life-saving medical innovation, or a heroic rescue from fire is equally capable of preventing a person from speaking in public, flying in a plane, entering a crowded place of worship, or even driving a car to work. Anxiety can be felt as mild or severe, acute or chronic, energizing or paralyzing. It acts as a spice that heightens the enjoyment of life for some people but, like physical pain, takes away joy from all the days of others. We all experience it in some form daily—some of us to a degree almost too intense to endure.

Anxiety's power to afflict human nature was perhaps best described by philosopher Søren Kierkegaard in *The Concept of Dread*. He wrote: "And no Grand Inquisitor has in readiness such terrible tortures as has anxiety, and no spy knows how to attack more artfully the man he suspects, choosing the instant when he is weakest, nor knows how to lay traps where he will be caught and ensnared, as anxiety knows how, and no sharpwitted judge knows how to interrogate, to examine the accused as anxiety does, which never lets him escape, neither by diversion nor by noise, neither at work nor at play, neither by day nor by night." Anxiety, Kierkegaard knew from experience, can be fierce as well as relentless.

On the other hand, a constructive function of anxiety was pointed out by research psychologist O. H. Mowrer, in *Learning Theory and Personality Dynamics*. He affirmed, "Anxiety... is not the cause of personal disorganization; rather it is the outcome or expression of such a state. The element of disorganization enters with the act of dissociation or repression, and anxiety represents not only an attempted return of the repressed but also a striving on the part of the total personality toward a re-establishment of unity, harmony, oneness, 'health.'" Anxiety can, therefore, be regarded as a sign that human nature is trying to heal itself and make itself whole, just as it can be understood as a signal that an individual is experiencing threat and thus suffering.

Because anxiety is such a vitally important emotion in relation to human development, my intention in writing this article is to give our readers a chance to update their knowledge about the topic, particularly in light of a new conception of "the anxiety disease." I will be (1) offering some definitions of normal and pathological anxiety, in comparison with fear; (2) reviewing the various forms in which anxiety is manifested; (3) examining a unified way of considering these diagnostic categories; (4) discussing the modes in which treatment for anxiety is professionally provided; and (5) making a variety of suggestions related to assisting anxiety-ridden persons.

ESSENTIAL TERMS DEFINED

First, some necessary definitions. Following Sigmund Freud, most psychiatrists and psychologists today make a distinction between anxiety and fear, the two emotions that result from perceiving oneself as being threatened. Experiencing fear, one's attention is directed principally toward the person, object, or situation regarded as imperiling one's well-being (e.g., a ferocious animal, berserk as-

sailant, or engulfing fire); it is a reaction to a specific danger to which a person can make a definite adjustment, such as by fleeing. Anxiety, in contrast, is a reaction to the apprehension of a threat that is vague, one that produces a feeling of diffuseness, uncertainty, and helplessness in the face of unspecific danger.

In the case of fear, once the threat is ended, whether by running away or by gaining reassurance, all apprehensiveness vanishes. In anxiety, an individual is afraid but at the same time uncertain about what he or she is afraid of. It tends to fix one's awareness on oneself; the more severe it is, the more one's awareness of objects in the external world is obscured.

In *The Meaning of Anxiety*, existential analyst Rollo May points out that anxiety and fear are emotional reactions that occur on different levels of the personality. He regards anxiety as "a response to threat on the basic level of the personality" (i.e., existence and values), whereas fears are "the response to threats before they get to this basic level." May believes that if people can learn to react adequately to the specific dangers that threaten them from outside, they can successfully avoid experiencing anxiety.

In a clarifying passage, May picturesquely explains: "If, however, one cannot cope with dangers in their specific forms, one will be threatened on the deeper level which we call the 'core' or 'essence' of personality. Using a military analogy, battles on various segments of the front lines represent specific threats; so long as the battle can be fought out on the periphery, so long as the dangers can be warded off in the outer fortifications, the vital areas are not threatened. But when the enemy breaks through into the capital of the country, when the inner lines of communication are broken and the battle is no longer localized; when, that is, the enemy attacks from all directions and the defending soldiers do not know which way to march or where to take a stand, we have the threat of being overwhelmed, with its corollaries, panic and frantic behavior. The latter is analogous to a threat to the basic values, the 'inner citadel' of the personality; and *in individual psychological terms it is the threat responded to as anxiety*."

May holds that anxiety always results from a threat to some value that the individual regards as essential to his existence as a personality; it might be to physical life, to psychological existence (e.g., loss of freedom, meaninglessness), or to any value that one identifies with one's existence (e.g., success, someone's love).

Another useful distinction made by Freud separates "neurotic" from "objective" (normal) anxiety. The neurotic kind is a reaction to threat that is (1) disproportionate to the objective danger, (2) involves intrapsychic conflict, and (3) is managed by retrenchment of activity and awareness, use of unconscious defense mechanisms, and development of symptoms. May calls neurotic "that [anxiety] which occurs when the incapacity for coping adequately with threats is not objective but subjective—i.e., due not to objective weakness but to inner psychological patterns and conflicts which prevent the individual from using his powers."

Normal anxiety is a reaction that (1) is not disproportionate to the objective threat, (2) does not involve intrapsychic conflict, (3) does not require defense mechanisms for its management, and (4) can be confronted constructively on the level of conscious awareness or relieved if the objective situation is changed. Such anxiety can be used creatively. For instance, the anxiety that we experience when we move away from our parents' home can prompt us to invest our talents and energies in fashioning a new living environment for ourselves; that which we feel while contemplating our mortality can motivate our developing strong and deep relationships while we still have time. Normal anxiety is a part of our everyday life and our development as persons; it is also closely related to our vulnerability to the powers of nature, fatigue, sickness, and death. It can be put to use in solving the problems that cause the anxiety, as opposed to neurotic anxiety that results in defensive avoidance of such problems. Thus, normal anxiety about contracting pneumonia can prompt us to dress warmly on a cold day. But neurotic anxiety in a person afraid of marriage can prompt a decision to choose celibacy and deny (defensively) that conjugal life is even worth considering.

ANXIETY AS SYMPTOM

Psychiatrists generally use the simple term "anxiety" as meaning the neurotic kind. They regard this type of anxiety as a *symptom* exhibited by an individual who has a feeling of apprehension or uneasiness, usually with no clear cause. Among the various clinical settings in which the symptom of anxiety can be seen are physical diseases (e.g., epilepsy, thyrotoxicosis); psychiatric disorders (e.g., schizophrenia, depression); drug intoxication (e.g., stimulants, including caffeine); and withdrawal states (e.g., from barbiturates or alcohol).

Other conditions in which anxiety is observed in a patient free of other diagnoses include the "major

IDENTIFYING THE APPREHENSIVE EMOTIONS

FEAR

Attention is principally directed toward → **A SPECIFIC PERSON, OBJECT, OR SITUATION** → Perceived as threatening to one's well-being

ANXIETY

Perceived as threatening to one's existence or basic values → **AN UNSPECIFIC DANGER** → Produces a feeling of diffuseness, uncertainty, and helplessness
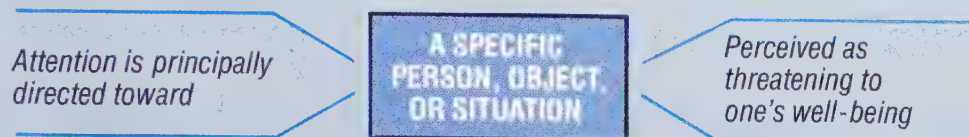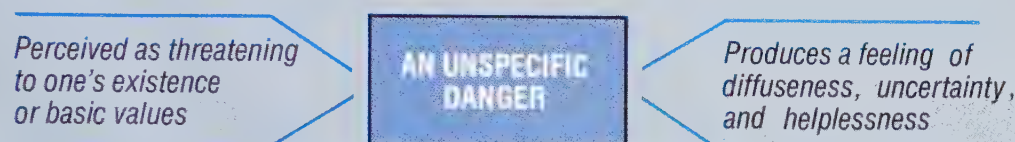
anxiety disorders" classified in the *Third Edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (DSM-III) of the American Psychiatric Association:

1. *Agoraphobia,* the fear of being alone or in public places
2. *Social phobia,* the fear of public scrutiny, or of being humiliated
3. *Panic disorder,* recurring panic attacks without an appropriate trigger or stimulus
4. *Generalized anxiety disorder,* the persistence of a state of anxiety without panic attacks, in the absence of other diagnoses
5. *Obsessive-compulsive disorder,* anxiety associated with recurrent thoughts that the person recognizes as foreign and thus resists (obsessions), accompanied by ritualistic actions that follow these recurrent thoughts (compulsions).

Another psychiatric category applies to many patients who appear to be suffering from a state of anxiety related solely to a recent situational event. In such instances, the anxiety may have a clear-cut focus or may be more free-floating, but in either case *situational anxiety* is considered to be the appropriate designation. One example would be a motorcyclist who has just come within a hairbreadth of a collision that could have proved fatal. In such a case, the person's anxiety symptoms are likely to decrease gradually, together with an increase in the ability to function, over the subsequent two to three weeks.

A final diagnostic category is that of *post-traumatic stress* disorder. Stressors responsible for anxiety in relation to this classification include earth-

quakes, military combat, rape, airplane crashes, and fire. Such traumatic events are outside the range of usual human experience and would be expected to evoke symptoms of distress, including anxiety, in most people. The degree of impairment is variable, as is the clinical course.

SOME BIOLOGICALLY PREDISPOSED

Just recently, Harvard University psychiatrist David Sheehan, in *The Anxiety Disease,* presented the new concept of *endogenous* (from Greek, "produced from within") anxiety. Citing scientific evidence currently accumulating, he describes this as a condition toward which many people appear to inherit a biological (genetic) predisposition. Its usual onset, says Sheehan, includes "spasms of anxiety that start suddenly, without warning, and for no apparent reason . . . the heart may race, or dizziness, choking, shortness of breath, or tingling may occur, even in the absence of any apparent stress or danger."

Such a reaction, without perceptible provocation, sets this experience apart from *exogenous* (also from Greek, "produced from the outside") anxiety that occurs when the individual is able to identify a justifiable source for the emotion aroused. Being held captive at gunpoint, with life itself threatened, would serve as an example. Such anxiety would fall into the category, as mentioned earlier, that Freud called "objective," or normal.

Victims suffering from endogenous anxiety at any given time include about five percent of the population, with one fifth of them experiencing it to a disabling degree. Four out of five are women,

Four out of five victims suffering from endogenous anxiety are women

the majority of whom are in childbearing years—a fact observed with constancy in all the countries where the disorder has been studied. Only rarely does the disease first manifest itself before the age of fifteen or after thirty-five. Stress-induced (exogenous) anxiety, on the other hand, affects both sexes equally and is found to begin at any age, whenever a frightening experience triggers it off (e.g., a phobia of dogs after being bitten by one).

SEVEN-STAGE DISEASE

Sheehan views "the anxiety disease" as including a series of stages through which patients progressively move over a period of several years. Some go through these stages in quick succession; others remain in one or another stage for years before moving on. In some cases, the stages do not follow in the exact order outlined, regressions occasionally occur, and at times all symptoms may disappear for weeks, months, or years, just as mysteriously as they began.

Stage 1: Spells of Anxiety. These occur suddenly, spontaneously, without warning, and for no apparent reason. Victims feel as if a part of the body has for a brief time lost control of itself. Symptoms include one or a few of the following: lightheadedness, faintness, dizzy spells, faintly sick feeling, sensation of fading out from the world, a feeling of imbalance while standing or walking, "jelly legs" (as if they are giving out), difficulty breathing, heart palpitations (awareness of pounding or racing), chest pain or pressure, choking sensation, nausea, hot flashes or flushes (sometimes with blotching of the skin), cold chills, diarrhea, headaches with associated pain in other parts of the body, derealization (things around become strange, unreal, foggy, detached from you), depersonalization (feeling outside or disconnected from your own body or a part of it).

Stage 2: Panic Attacks. These sudden episodes of intense apprehension, fear, or terror, often with feelings of impending doom, include *at least four* of the following symptoms during each attack: (1) difficulty breathing, (2) heart palpitations, (3) chest pain or discomfort, (4) choking or smothering sensations, (5) dizziness, vertigo, or unsteady feelings,

(6) feelings of unreality, (7) tingling in hands or feet, (8) hot and cold flashes, (9) sweating, (10) faintness, (11) trembling or shaking, (12) fear of dying, going crazy, or doing something uncontrolled during an attack. These episodes usually last minutes; rarely do they continue for hours. They occur as often as three or four times a week, and in female patients they are more likely to occur premenstrually. One patient insisted: "If you invented hell, you'd have to include this as part of the package."

Stage 3: Hypochondriasis. The patient unrealistically interprets his or her physical signs or sensations as abnormal, and then becomes preoccupied with the fear or belief of having a serious disease. Thorough medical evaluation does not support the diagnosis of any actual physical disorder, but the preoccupation persists despite medical reassurance. Impairment of social or occupational functioning is usual. Often a variety of physicians are consulted, as one body system after another is believed by the patient to be diseased.

Stage 4: Limited Phobias. These are abiding, irrational fears of certain situations or things that are in some way related to the first spontaneous panic attacks (stage 2). If it happened in a bus, open space, small enclosure, shopping center, church, tall building, when alone, in a crowd, near an animal, or in any other specific circumstances, fear becomes attached to similar objects or situations, by unconscious association, and a compelling need to avoid these becomes as strong as the anxiety is intense. The individual realizes that his or her fear is excessive or unreasonable. Single phobias can also be acquired in other, more complex ways, which Sheehan describes in his book.

Stage 5: Social Phobia. This is a persistent, irrational fear of, and compelling desire to avoid, a situation in which the person is exposed to possible scrutiny by others and fears that he or she may act in a way that will be humiliating or embarrassing. Eating, drinking, writing, or speaking in public may be avoided. Again, the distressed individual recognizes that the fear is excessive or unreasonable.

Stage 6: Agoraphobia/Extensive Phobic Avoidance. As anxiety attacks and spells become more frequent, more phobias are acquired. In other words, the increasing number of frightening or terrifying episodes occurring amid new circumstances results in the development of fears of additional places, objects, and situations, again through a process of unconscious association.

The term "agoraphobic" (derived from the Greek word *agora*, meaning a place of assembly) is generally used to describe individuals who have acquired a considerable number of phobias and, as a result, are either housebound or immobilized to such an extent that relatively few ordinarily encountered situations remain unlinked to fearful-

FORCES INTERACTING TO PRODUCE THE VARIOUS STAGES

PHYSICAL DEFECT
(Neurobiological and Endocrine)

PSYCHOLOGICAL CONDITIONING
(Through Unconscious Association)

THE ANXIETY DISEASE

STRESS
(From Environment or Inner Conflict)
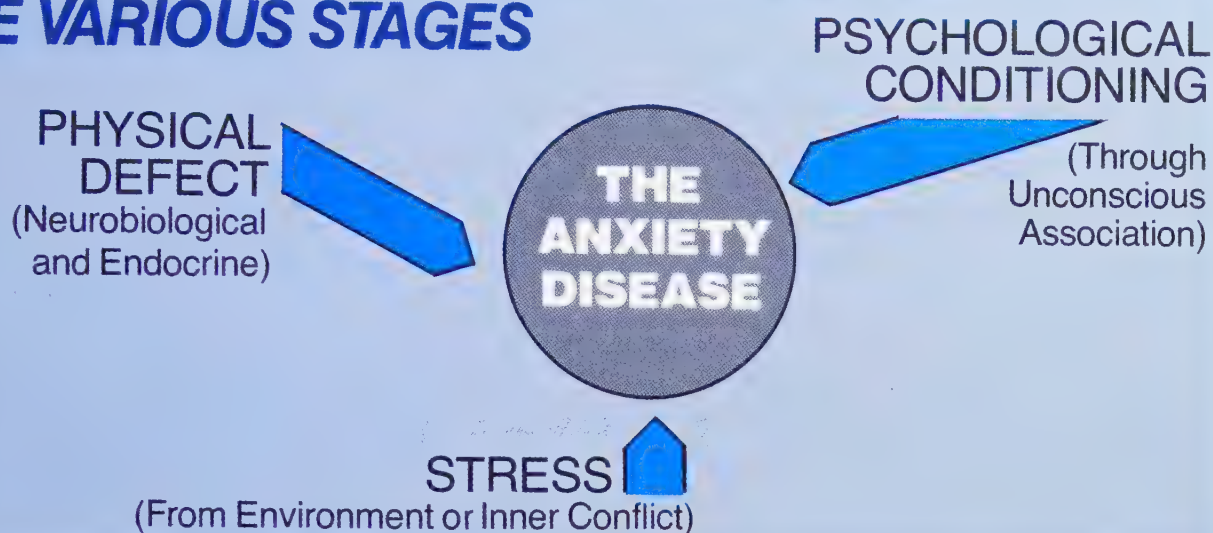
ness. Dread of open or crowded places, public transportation, being alone, crossing a bridge, and entering a tunnel is commonly found among these chronically timorous individuals. Still, their most intense and incapacitating fear is that of going through another spontaneous panic attack.

Stage 7: Depression. Feelings of hopelessness, helplessness, worthlessness, and guilt are accompanied by a negative or pessimistic attitude toward things viewed positively before. These are not constant, but come and go unpredictably. Guilt feelings are especially centered on the illness-caused restriction of the lives and opportunities of others, particularly loved ones. Although these signs of depression are similar to those seen in other depressed states, in this stage antidepressant medication is not usually helpful; neither is suicide likely to be attempted.

OTHER PROBLEMS LINKED

Sheehan has observed that endogenous anxiety can also produce difficulty in falling or remaining asleep. Furthermore, it causes what physicians call pavor nocturnus (night panic), in which a fully asleep person awakens in a state of terror, overcome by panic, a phenomenon peculiar to this disorder. Frequently, this type of episode is accompanied by a racing heart and shortness of breath, at times by a sensation of dying. Some individuals with the anxiety disease, instead of having insomnia, sleep excessively. They experience daytime feelings of tiredness and weakness, a fatigue whose scientific name is neurasthenia.

The disease can also affect the sex life of its victims. They sometimes come to realize that the ex-

perience of sexual arousal in intercourse—letting one's body go and giving up a sense of control—is in some ways similar to the symptoms of a panic attack. They develop a phobia in regard to orgasm, find their sexual performance consequently disrupted, and soon find their sexual interest and drive greatly diminished, or even abolished.

Loss of appetite for food, bringing with it a loss of weight, troubles some people who are endogenously anxious. Others, however, find that food can serve as a tranquilizer; they overeat when anxious and thus put on excessive weight. Still others develop a revulsion to food, and repeated episodes of nausea and vomiting plague them.

In an attempt to control the symptoms of the disease, about a fifth of all panic victims begin to abuse alcohol; it provides relief from symptoms for a few hours, but when its calming effect wears off, a rebound of the suppressed symptoms occurs, more anxiety and panic ensue, and further drinking is initiated. Tranquilizing drugs such as Valium, Librium, barbiturates, and sleeping tablets are similarly abused, by some to the point of addiction, even though patients know from experience that these do not stop spontaneous panic attacks. Finding that by using them they do gain some temporary relief from tension and anxiety, they inadvisedly keep on increasing the doses they take, in the unjustified hope that eventually they will prevent these attacks from occurring.

TREATMENT IS TARGETED

Sheehan and many other physicians today are convinced that three different forces interact to bring on the various stages of the anxiety disease. These include

Trying to control the symptoms of the disease, about a fifth of all panic victims begin to abuse alcohol

(1) *a physical defect* (probably neurobiological and endocrine) that lies at the center of the disorder, (2) *psychological conditioning* (through a process of unconscious association) that results in a multiplication of feared objects and situations, and (3) *stress* provoked by things going wrong in the environment (e.g., loss of job, victim of theft) or conflict being experienced within the individual (e.g., a priest in love with a woman but still wanting celibacy). Thus, the treatment offered by professionals to patients who seek it these days is aimed specifically toward all three of these forces—to control the disease's metabolic core, to overcome the phobias, and to deal with the psychosocial and environmental stresses. Current medical thinking, as a result of recent clinical experience and research, calls for trying medication first, behavior therapy second, and psychotherapy third.

Appropriate treatment can begin only when a precise diagnosis has been made. To accomplish this, a physician carefully examines the anxiety-experiencing patient with intent to rule out medical illnesses that could cause the symptoms seen in the anxiety disease (e.g., epilepsy, brucellosis, multiple sclerosis) and psychiatric conditions that might present themselves in a similar way (e.g., schizophrenia, manic-depressive psychosis). Once these other illnesses are ruled out, and the diagnosis of the anxiety disease is made, the physician generally treats its predominant, biological cause by any one of an array of drugs (mostly antidepressant type), many of which have been recently developed and do not leave patients in a "drugged" state. These include such medicines as Nardil, Marplan, Parnate, Tofranil, Norpramin, Elavil, Desyrel, Tolvon, and Xanax. It is encouraging for the patient to know that doctors have come to realize that even if the symptoms of the anxiety disease have been severe and it has reached an advanced stage, it will be no less responsive to treatment.

Some of the drugs just mentioned take effect more quickly (a few days), others more slowly (three to four weeks). Some are accompanied by more unpleasant side effects (e.g., drowsiness, dry mouth), some fewer. Some do not mix well with certain foods, drinks, and medications, which consequently must be completely avoided. Dose levels have to be adjusted to each individual patient, and each of these drugs must be tapered off gradually— never stopped suddenly—even if it is ineffective.

It remains unclear why some individuals respond better to one of these medicines than to others. They all require a physician's prescription, and any licensed doctor can prescribe them. However, certain medical specialists (psychopharmacologists) devote most of their time to treating patients with these medicines. Patients seeking the expert opinion of these specialists can easily find them by consulting (in person or by phone) the psychopharmacology unit within any hospital that is affiliated with a medical school.

OVERCOMING THE PHOBIAS

Although drugs are suitable for blocking the spontaneous panic attacks, they are generally unable to eradicate the phobias. Patients must go back into the phobic situations without fleeing and must learn to become comfortable there. Usually, some form of behavior therapy is needed in order to enable them to overcome these fears, and generally such treatment is provided by clinical psychologists, not usually by psychiatrists.

Behavior therapy comprises a variety of methods, including systematic desensitization, flooding, cognitive restructuring, and exposure treatment. All of these have much in common: they are based on the assumption that responses are learned, or conditioned, and they attempt to reverse the process. They are methods of relearning more normal responses and are sometimes called "deconditioning" techniques. Principles guiding this type of therapy include the following: (1) The treatment situation should be as true-to-life as possible. (2) Exposure should be as intense as possible. (3) Exposure should last as long as possible. (4) Exposure should be repeated as frequently as possible. (5) The usual flight response should be prevented as effectively as possible. The more successfully these principles are applied, the more quickly and completely will the phobia be overcome. The four types of behavior therapy mentioned above can be briefly described as follows:

1. *Systematic desensitization:* This relatively slow and gentle process leads patients through an individually tailored treatment program that begins by teaching them how to achieve deep muscular relaxation and then gradually exposing them—first through vivid imagination and later in reality—to the object or situation (e.g., dog, elevator, supermarket) of which they have been afraid. They learn to voluntarily maintain relaxation throughout each step, as little by little they approach the point where they can successfully encounter what they have feared and remain free of anxiety.

2. *Flooding:* This is a behavioral therapeutic technique that involves repeatedly exposing an individual to the circumstances that usually evoke anxiety in him or her, while blocking possible escape. The therapist supplies a verbal description of events or situations that might possibly occur in the life of the patient, thus arousing the patient's imagination. The procedure can also be conducted *in vivo*, with the actual feared objects or contexts recreated in the therapeutic setting or appropriate location to which the client is transported. This technique relies on a basic assumption that when avoidance behavior is prevented, the anxiety-eliciting properties of stimuli or events may be extinguished, if the anxiety is aroused but the dreaded outcomes do not occur. The treatment is often successful, but at times it has been found to generate more anxiety than patients could handle and thereby exacerbated their fear response. For this reason it should be attempted only by thoroughly trained and experienced therapists.

3. *Cognitive Restructuring.* Untreated phobic persons generally have very negative attitudes in regard to themselves and what they fear (e.g., "I'll never be able to face it without running"; "I'll panic, I'm sure"; "The dog will bite me if I go near it"). Such pessimistic and even catastrophic thoughts are modified through this cognitive technique, so that positive, hopeful, optimistic attitudes are developed, and confrontation with the feared situation is approached with hopefulness as well as determination.

4. *Exposure Treatment.* This method involves only action—confronting the feared place or thing directly, intensely, in a prolonged and repeated way. No escape is permitted. Relaxation and imagination are not required. People who are highly motivated and courageous are the most successful using this technique. Some are, understandably, too frightened to apply it beneficially. This is the treatment of choice for those who have only one phobia and do not experience panic attacks. Phobic individuals who attempt to use this tactic but find themselves overwhelmed with anxiety when they encounter what they fear are generally advised to use the more gentle and gradual desensitization approach described above.

Behavior therapy *alone* does not usually succeed in treating the anxiety disease, which involves a number of phobias along with spontaneous panic attacks. Even when the use of one or more of these methods does enable patients to eliminate their phobias—the complications of the disorder—the underlying disease itself has not been effectively treated. But if the phobias are treated through behavior modification after the metabolic core of the disease is adequately controlled by an effective

medicine, they are often successfully and permanently eradicated.

FOCUSING ON STRESS

In order to help patients learn to cope more effectively with whatever life stresses or conflicts are resulting in the anxiety that may still be troubling them after panic and phobias are curtailed, psychotherapy is employed next. Three important elements are involved. The first requires that the therapist be a good listener (i.e., empathic, respectful, accepting, nonjudgmental, patient, etc.). Second, the stresses, psychological problems, or intrapsychic conflicts need to be identified and clarified. Various possible solutions are explored, and the advantages and disadvantages of each are examined in a systematic way. Third, once patients decide what solution appears best (e.g., a change in lifestyle, relationships, goals, etc.), they need support and encouragement to accomplish what they intend. Ultimately, it is the patient who must make the necessary changes, but a caring, compassionate counselor can usually contribute a great deal as facilitator of this anxiety-dispelling process.

It is not uncommon for patients to experience a return of their anxiety symptoms once their medication doses have been tapered off and finally terminated. When this occurs, early intervention is important. The more quickly a flare-up is treated, the better the physician's chance of preventing the redevelopment of phobias. Physical illness, death of a loved one, surgery, childbirth, anesthesia, and smoking marijuana provide some of the common occasions for a relapse. Frequently, medication alone can bring such a recurrence to a halt. At times, however, additional psychotherapy is needed for a brief period; rarely is further behavior therapy required, as long as intervention occurs before new phobias are acquired.

The same treatment modalities are available to professionals providing therapy for anxiety in patients who are diagnosed as having emotional disorders other than that which we have been considering here as the anxiety disease. These and other widely used medications and techniques for treatment and prevention of anxiety have been discussed in earlier articles appearing in HUMAN DE-

> Patients who suffer from panic attacks and phobias are victims of an illness, not showing a "weakness"

VELOPMENT ("The Stresses of Leadership," "Coping with Stress in the 1980s," and "Celibate Anxiety," Volume I, 1980).

WAYS OF ASSISTING

There are a number of suggestions that deserve to be made to those who are desirous of being helpful to persons suffering the pain of anxiety that is more intense, frequent, or prolonged than human beings would ordinarily experience. They include the following:

1. Remind these anxious persons that relief is possible and available.
2. Encourage them to consult a physician for evaluation of their condition and appropriate treatment or referral.
3. Inform them that a great deal is known scientifically about anxiety and about ways of treating it. Recommend books like *The Anxiety Disease.*
4. Get in touch with an experienced librarian who can provide information that will be useful to these patients, their family, or religious community. Don't discourage them from reading the journals and text books available to doctors, other clinicians, and specialists.
5. Accompany anxious patients to their physician's or therapist's office, if necessary.
6. Encourage patients to take their medications and perform their relaxation exercises as prescribed.
7. Inform the therapist about how much the patient's work, social life, leisure activity, and home responsibilities are impaired.
8. Tell the patient's doctor what side effects of drugs you observe. Signs might include agitation, restlessness, tremors, unsteadiness, poor coordination, confusion, irritability, sadness, decrease in appetite, weight loss, increased eating, weight gain, sweating, jaundice, forgetfulness, or talking too much.
9. Be available to help phobic patients go into situations they have feared. Ask their therapist's advice about the best way of accompanying and supporting them.
10. Occasionally, point out to the patient's doctor the signs of improvement or regression you are observing.
11. As patients become less anxious and less dependent on others, they often become more demanding and aggressive; understand and accept this as a sign of progress. Weakness, fear, passivity, and sickness are passing. As they struggle for independence and freedom, they tend to make those who have helped them feel rejected and unappreciated. Don't show disapproval of their behavior.
12. Give encouragement and support in every way

possible to the patient in treatment. Improvements call for rewards and words of praise.
13. Be patient and allow for normal mistakes and flounderings of growth while those in treatment make progress, often slowly.
14. Because anxious patients feel hopeless, helpless, and worthless, especially at the start of treatment, they need to be dealt with hopefully and with obvious signs and gestures of esteem.
15. Express frankly your belief that patients who suffer from panic attacks and phobias are victims of an illness, not showing a "weakness" over which they should feel ashamed.
16. Stress the biological nature of their disease and the fact that they should no more feel guilty than a diabetic or cardiac patient should.
17. Once the antipanic medication has been prescribed, taken, and adjusted over a several-week period, encourage patients to do the things they have been avoiding, gradually assisting them to become more independent.
18. Remember that a powerful bond can be developed within a family or community as they struggle together, patiently and with courage, to regain full health for their afflicted member.
19. Parents and religious superiors should manifest appreciation to all their family or community members for putting up with the patient's symptoms, and for readjusting their lives to cope with the restrictions imposed on them.
20. After treatment is successfully completed, promptly report any signs of relapse to the patient's physician.
21. Encourage patients to take notes or use a tape recorder during treatment sessions if they are having difficulty remembering their doctor's instructions or advice.
22. Finally, from time to time it may be helpful—for anxious patients as well as those striving to help them—to reflect upon Kierkegaard's profound observation: "I would say that learning to know anxiety is an adventure which every man has to affront if he would not go to perdition either by not having known anxiety or by sinking under it. He therefore who has learned rightly to be anxious has learned the most important thing."

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THE PRIEST AS PRESENCE

REVEREND THOMAS G. CASERTA

Five years in the priesthood, although hardly a lifetime, is enough time to experience the intertwining of suffering and joy that compose the mystery of priestly existence. This article seeks to articulate some of that mystery, particularly the intangible quality of priestly presence.

Many years ago a priest whom I admire greatly told me something I later read in John L'Heureux's *Picnic in Babylon*. "Tom," my friend said, "someday as a priest you will be the only Christ some people will ever know." These words have stayed with me as a gentle challenge over the past fifteen years. My friend's words were with me as I knelt in front of the bishop, as I buried the young and the old of a busy urban parish, as I entered emergency rooms and nursing homes, as I socialized with the young people of my diocese's youth retreat program, and as I tried to share some of the complexity of the spiritual life with university students.

The statement "the only Christ some will ever know" is more than a simple or sentimental aphorism. To me it communicates a dramatic call to develop a deep appreciation of the question of priestly presence. A commonplace notion in religious life, based on Gabriel Marcel's distinction between being and having, stresses that the value of a person rests with who they are instead of what they do. Nowhere is the primacy of being over having more clearly seen than in priestly ministry. I have learned very quickly that many times I can *do* nothing in my ministry. More often than not, I am simply needed to *be* there. Even when present with bread and wine or water and oil to celebrate the sacraments, this quality of presence taking priority over actions seems to dominate the experience. I have preached far more eloquent sermons over a cup of coffee, at a parish car wash, or while painting a living room than when using any clever homiletic skills. In doing this, I have been continually reminded that the Lord has called a person, not pastoral skills or deft classroom lectures, to be the only Christ that some people will ever know.

This conviction of the importance of presence is not meant to substitute presence for creative and well-integrated ministerial skills. Presence simply reminds us that the warm, alive, and free person is the essence of ministry. Degrees can't listen; programs and outlines do not dry tears or share laughter. Human hearts and hands do that. The rich experiences of the past five years have shown me that three vital realities sustain the mystery of priestly presence. Those three realities are compassion, fidelity, and celebration.

COMPASSION BRINGS VISION

Priestly presence is first a matter of compassion. Henri Nouwen named solidarity—the ability to stand with other human beings as one of them — as a primary component of compassion. This idea of oneness with our fellow human beings is the key to the compassion of priestly presence. Karl Rahner once commented that "the priest is not an angel sent from God." If presence is to be compassionate, it begins with the realization that I am like others. I try, succeed, weep, and rejoice just like everyone else. How often I have forgiven others the same sins I commit; how often I have talked with another about loss or frustration, while feeling the sting of my own loneliness. When I acknowledge my unity with others who are striving to be all God has created them to be, I can see them as the Lord does. I can be present to them in compassion. I am able to confront our mutual vulnerability with the

MYSTERY OF PRIESTLY EXISTENCE

JOY · SUFFERING · SUFFER · JOY · JOY · SUFFERING
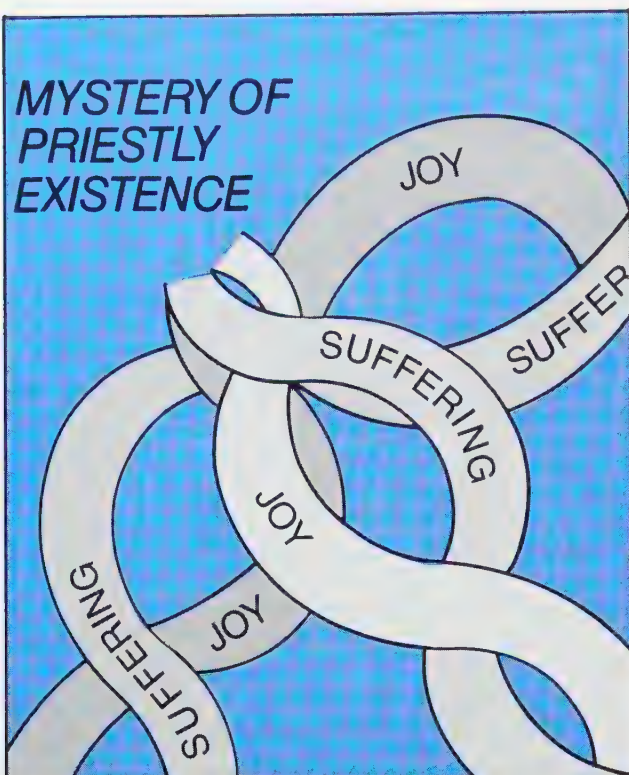
words of the Lord to the young man, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." Compassion gives us the eyes of the Lord, eyes that see value even in the greatest human weakness.

For compassion to be genuine, it must be embodied. We need to place our bodies in service to the kingdom. A woman who had worked many hours on a parish fund raiser that had achieved great success offered a congratulatory kiss to the pastor. Her genuine affection was met with two backward steps and the words "Gee, that's not my style." People in ministry are often reluctant to touch, yet our Lord seemed never afraid to touch or caress. Neither an excuse for inappropriate behavior nor a rationalized way out of chastity, embodied compassion is a challenge to recall that if the Lord has called a person, body and soul, then many times an affectionate kiss or a friendly embrace can be a powerful sign of his love. The imposition of hands in the sacrament of penance is an eloquent testimony to this ideal of embodied compassion. The compassion of priestly presence is much needed in an often-suspicious and divided contemporary world.

GIVING OF SELF

Fidelity is the second reality of priestly presence, a quality deeply rooted in the very reality of God. In the Old Testament we read of the *emeth Yahweh*. Although usually translated as "truth," *emeth* is

more accurately the quality of fidelity. God would always be faithful to the chosen people. This fidelity, crucial in ministry, calls the person to be true to the deepest self, the place where God dwells within. As such, fidelity goes beyond any external vow or promise and touches the internal reality of the call to live in unique, personal union with God. Fidelity begins with myself, challenged to be the person God created, not my idea of the person I should be. Fidelity invites me beyond the compulsiveness of an ideal self and allows me to surrender inappropriate approval seeking for a single-hearted dedication to being and accepting the person God created me to be.

Although the ministry can be a place of great openness and service, it can also be the place of much hiding and subterfuge. How often I have hidden behind the Roman collar! The symbol of my availability and commitment can become a way of hiding from relationships or controlling uncomfortable situations. Although difficult to give myself in ministry, it is precisely the self that the Lord has redeemed. Fidelity calls me to give myself as I am with the deep conviction that in the realm of grace my liabilities as well as my assets can build the city of God.

This honesty necessarily spills over into my relationships with others. The fidelity of priestly presence allows me to invite others to be as God created them and frees me from placing unrealistic expectations on others. If I am at home with myself, I can appreciate others as they are. Fidelity allows me to move beyond infatuation with what I want others to be, then urges me toward a genuine appreciation and love of others as they are. Being true to myself in imitation of the *emeth Yahweh* allows me to respect the mystery of others and of all reality. People and creation were not made to be understood and controlled, but to be wondered at and appreciated. Fidelity allows me to respect this and enables me to pray with Psalm 139, "For all these mysteries I thank you: for the wonder of myself, for the wonder of your works."

CALLED TO TRANSFORM

When I live with a sense of solidarity with others while being true to the person God created me to be, I can live in a spirit of celebration, the third quality of priestly presence. The spirit of celebration is an often-neglected reality in ministry. Those who are asked to celebrate the liturgy are often removed from a sense of celebration in their personal lives. I am distressed to see so many of my brothers and sisters celebrate the Eucharist and liturgy of the hours in a dour and removed way.

The meaning of celebration and presence in the ministry resembles what C. S. Lewis called "divine sensuality," the ability to make moments of pleasure into acts of adoration and praise. I grew up in

a home where food was considered sacred, and a meal was a ritual in which my mother's cooking was an extension of her love for us. I learned much about acceptance at the dining room table. A spirit of celebration calls us to make social gatherings like meals and parties into warm experiences of acceptance and togetherness. Such experiences of human celebration can be profound moments of gratitude and praise.

When I compete in sports, swallow a cool drink on a hot day, or embrace someone I love, I am filled with a sense of the goodness of God. A spirit of celebration in ministry allows those good times access to prayer and liturgy where they can transform rote prayer and ritual into genuine moments of children at play in the presence of their Father. Celebration as an aspect of priestly presence enables the minister to follow the advice of St. Paul to "rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep." Above all, a spirit of celebration allows me to savor all the moments of life as they are. I can say with the apostles on Mount Tabor, "Lord, it is good for us to be here."

A wonderful story told about St. Anthony of the Desert, together with an experience of my own, forms the conclusion to these reflections. Tradition says that three monks would go to visit Anthony each year. Two would speak, while one always remained silent. When Anthony questioned the monk about his silence, he received this answer: "It is enough to see you, Father." In my first year as a priest I had an experience that bore out the truth of this desert wisdom. After confessions one Saturday evening, I ran from church to a neighboring drug store. On my way out of the store someone stopped me and said, "Father, it's so good to see

MYSTERY OF PRIESTLY PRESENCE

CELEBRATION

COMPASSION

FIDELITY
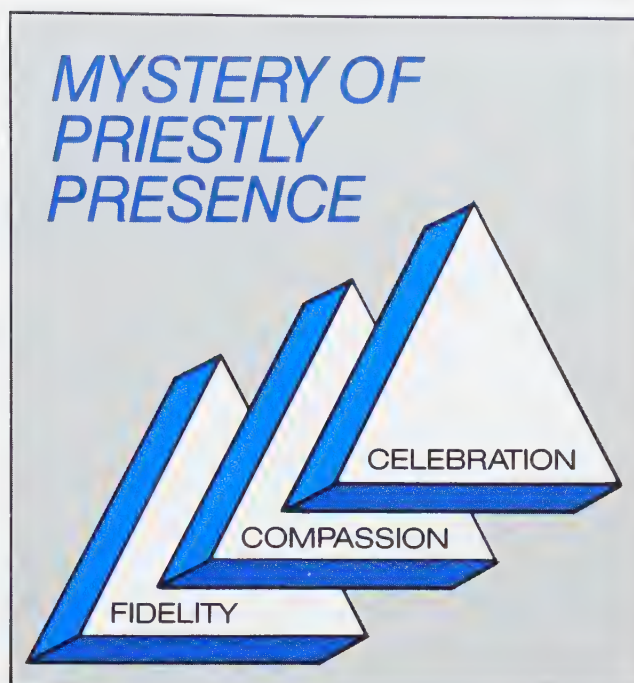
you." I thanked the person but said I didn't believe we had met. She turned and said, "Oh no, Father, I just meant it was good to see a priest." That encounter stays with me as a kind of icon of priestly presence. When we can be with others and for others in such a way that who we are speaks more deeply than what we do, we begin to experience ministry as presence. It is then that we can be certain that Christ is being glorified in our bodies. We will know with Paul, "For me to live is Christ."

Maturing Through Hysterectomy

BRENDA HERMANN, M.S.B.T., B.C.S.W.

Only in the course of time and of relationships have I come to an understanding of myself and the issue of loss as a part of having a hysterectomy. I was first introduced to the word "hysterectomy" when I was in my twenties and experiencing severe menstrual problems. I recall being told that I did not ovulate, because of cystic ovaries, and that these cysts were believed to be benign. The implication was that if I were not in a religious community but married, I would not be able to have children. "Womanhood" and my reproductive system were not primary to my psyche at that time, probably because the issues in my life were not yet vocational. I was young and idealistic and devoted to being a celibate religious woman who freely gave up marriage and children for the Lord. If the thought that I was unable to have children ever registered, it did so only on the unconscious level.

Medical concerns regarding menstruation did not lessen in my late twenties and early thirties. I was hospitalized for removal of a ruptured cyst in the left ovary, and within a six-year period had two additional operations, one to remove the uterus and left ovary, the last to remove the right ovary. Three major operations in order to have a complete hysterectomy was a long and difficult way to deal with a medical problem. It is the psychological, spiritual, and emotional effects of this process, however, of which I write.

During my twenties I did not feel that losing parenting capacity was a critical issue. I had made a vocational choice and was not in love or even attracted to any one man; I was learning about community life and establishing myself as a professional religious woman. The loss of an integral part of me was not in any way a conscious issue.

By the time my physical condition became worse, I was also facing some serious developmental issues. I cannot say that one did not affect the other, for I have a basic belief that body and soul are one and not easily dichotomized. As I entered my late twenties, the question of community style and quality of living was a serious one. I was achieving as a professional woman, had formed many relationships outside community, and was increasingly conscious of femininity and developing social roles within a church structure. My menstrual cycle became more difficult, and I was placed on estrogen therapy (birth control pills), which triggered a flare-up of an autoimmune disease. During this period I made the decision to remain in vowed life but not in the community of earlier choice. I transferred to an apostolic religious congregation and within its framework began to deal with some of the issues of femininity, male-female relationships, love, sexuality, and friendship.

LOSS BECOMES ISSUE

The transfer coincided with the first major surgery (because of the ruptured ovarian cyst) and with beginning consciousness of body image. Perhaps the uprooting from one community to another was responsible, but the primary issue that surfaced for me was one of loss. I concentrated on the stages of separation and dying but did not under-

stand that I was also dealing with internal changes that involved my sexuality and femaleness. While I was unconsciously experiencing loss because of the changes in my own female system, I did not recognize the stages of grief and mourning as separate from the transfer to a new community.

Four years later I was told that I would need a hysterectomy, possibly a complete one. This prognosis came at the time I had made a move from the Northeast to the Deep South and had again left many friends and family to come to a section of the country that I did not yet understand. It also came at a time when I had formed some very close friendships with men. I had moved to an administrative position in a diocesan setting and was a female leader in a predominately male church environment in a Southern culture where "woman" is viewed differently from her Northern counterpart. Now in my thirties, I was dealing with developmental concerns that, when they surfaced, I would quickly deny. I no longer had vocational preoccupations as an escape, so I tended to deal with professional issues, and my unresolved concerns about femininity and womanhood were shelved or projected onto the job.

MOURNING NOT ALLOWED

Facing the hysterectomy, I felt the need for a great deal of reassurance, which I sought in both male and female friendships. Because I had already had major surgery once, had a chronic disease, and was generally feeling very scared, I needed to talk out my fears. I felt no control over my own body and expressed rage at having to be mutilated to be made whole. At times my anger or fear was out of proportion to the actual event, but I believe (in retrospect) that it was needed. Hysterectomy was still a clinical concept, and I feared the pain and recuperation more than the loss; I was still going through the paces and not allowing any mourning to occur.

I did deal with some irrational but real concerns. Would I get fat, grow hair, become mannish? Would I grow old fast? Because I am a small woman the concern about breast size and body image surfaced, especially in relation to how the other sex would perceive me. I recall asking a close male friend if he would still love me if I grew a beard or looked like a man. All the reading in the world and intelligent conversation did not eliminate the basic anxiety or fears.

Why were body image and female attractiveness such issues, especially for a woman religious? No doubt because I was at an age when these matters were uppermost in my psyche. I had dealt with vocational concerns, then with professional ones; now I had to deal with me. I was still not in touch with all that it meant, but I knew I was losing something I couldn't see. Unlike a woman who has

Stages of grief and mourning

Adaptation

Denial

Emotional pain

Depression

Regression

Need to be in control of my feelings

Pain of separation
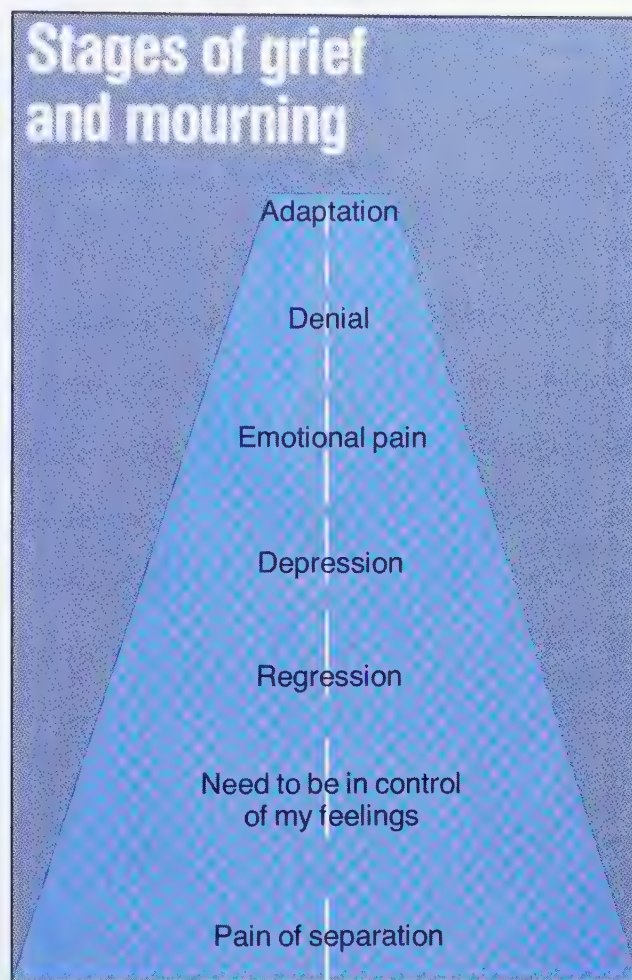
a breast removed, I wouldn't notice much of a change externally. I remember touching the scar (where surgeons had been careful to make the same incision each time for cosmetic reasons) and being aware of some of the feelings of rage and powerlessness, the sense of mutilation.

That hysterectomy was partial; the doctor decided to leave one ovary so that menopause would not be abrupt and I would not need long-term estrogen replacement. Even then, the term menopause was synonymous with old age, hot flashes, and general debilitation. I was fearful of getting old before my time and felt angry because I was too young for all of this mess.

FEELINGS REMAIN VIVID

Friends were critically needed during this period of my life. Yet I still had personal, private homework to do, and I was forced to face deeper issues in a very painful way. While I was undergoing the second operation, we discovered my mother had a terminal disease. My recuperation was marked

All loss must ultimately be
resolved, lest it become
part of another ongoing
life issue

with anxiety about her and a desire to mend quickly so that I could travel North and size up the situation myself. Again, I delayed any personal mourning over self. Within the next two years my mother became worse and anticipatory grief became a way of life for the entire family. I was faced with the critical awareness of "mother." Much has been written on loss and the stages of grieving, especially in relation to the death of a loved one. I can vividly describe the feelings and the stages associated with the terminal illness of my mother, with her death and burial, and after that, with the period of mourning.

I can also describe, similarly, the stages of grief and mourning associated with my transfer to another religious community—the pain of separation, the need to be in control of my feelings and reactions, the regression, the depression, the amount of emotional pain, the mechanism of denial. These were also escape routes, established in order to avoid facing the feelings of hopelessness and helplessness. Finally, there was the period of adaptation, the incorporation of death (of the loved one, the circumstances, the old community). All loss must ultimately be resolved, lest it become part of another ongoing life issue.

Are the same stages faced when a person loses a part of the body, in this case, a woman her reproductive system? I believe so. The stages may not be as clearly seen or even understood, but they exist, and if not made conscious, they will be demonstrated in other ways.

During my mother's last hospitalization, I had (with the community) made the decision to move to Louisiana to take on a more responsible ministry. Her death in June was followed by my move in September.

Within the first two years of my new assignment, I had surgery, to remove the last ovary. Its demise was swift and I did not have much time to think of the implications, much less come to grips with my history of surgery and the yet-unresolved issues. My salvation came recently while making a private

retreat; this experience enabled some of my fears to surface and be lovingly shared and healed.

The retreat experience showed me that the time between my operations, especially the last two, had been marked with many subtle changes within me, my environment, and my relationships, especially with men. Whereas I was more aware of my femininity, I had not faced the fear of its loss through loss of my reproductive system. I became less gentle and open, more brittle and unyielding. I was battling for a diocesan job, often to the detriment of good grace and humor. I was struggling with issues still at an unconscious level, and I was dreadfully in need of the availability of male and female friends and the affirmation and affection I received from them. I often reacted out of proportion to celibate male friends when they were talking about children or ogling babies; I resented their looking at younger women as though they wore their womb on the outside. I couldn't understand my own reactions, because I did not yet own my own feelings or fears. I alienated the very people I loved and needed.

PARTINGS BRING PAIN

During the retreat, I examined the many times I had faced loss thoughout my life, and I looked especially at the loss of my mother and mothering. It was only after the last ovary was removed that I could face this reality. It was only through healing my memory of losing my mother and by letting her go that I could face my own issue of never being a physical mother. Saying goodbye is never easy for me; I experience great emotion in an airport or train terminal whenever I leave a loved one. Why, then, would I not experience difficulty in saying goodbye to my self, a very intimate part of me?

In understanding the loss of this part of me, I had to understand the concepts of fruitfulness, productivity, nurturing, and giving life. I had to be able to understand my body, how it works and how it would change with surgical menopause. I was forced to face the facts associated with becoming a middle-aged woman immediately, before I was middle-aged.

At the time of my retreat, I was only ten months beyond surgery and two and a half years beyond the death of my mother. I was not through with the mourning or grieving over her loss, and I was still hurt, angry, and unforgiving toward God and her for the departure. I could not bury my mother and allow her to be dead, thus freeing her to enjoy eternal life.

I became conscious of this when the director suggested that I dialogue with my mother and tell her that I want her to be happy, and to say goodbye. As he gently told me, I had become fixated at the grave, losing both a parent and my own parenting

ability. In recognizing this, I was able to sense the deep feelings within me associated with the loss of my womb.

CRISIS OVER MOTHERHOOD

I can best describe that realization in the context of loving relationships with men and women. I realized that within a caring, trusting relationship with a good celibate male friend, I had become conscious of not being able to have a child. I have never wanted children (consciously) and as long as that remained my choice, it was agreeable. Now, I realized that the choice had been removed from me because of disease. In my fantasy relationship regarding my dear friend, I believed that he could not love and appreciate half a woman, and although there was not conscious desire to have his child, or anyone else's, there was anxiety about not being fruitful in the relationship. I chose to deal with the anxiety as it surfaced, in dialogue with him. Because he is a caring, wise person, the dialogue was both humorous and deeply spiritual. I began to understand mothering as an issue to be reckoned with, and this began the process of unraveling all its implications.

Many people, especially priests, jokingly call me "mother." I have usually considered this to be uncomplimentary but now realize that the negativity came from within me. I didn't believe I could be one so why pretend? To me, the removal of the uterus meant removal of a nurturing, giving, fruitful femininity. I was a new species, foreign to myself. Above all, I had never thought of myself as a mother, so why, after all of this surgery, was I being forced to deal with something I thought I never wanted!

I do not propose that all women face the same issues when having a hysterectomy. But all the preparation in the world does not eliminate the need for going through the stages of loss, many of which are triggered by the surgery itself. These issues, I maintain, need to be recognized whether one is in community or not, whether one is married, single, or in vowed life. Hysterectomy means a loss of a part of oneself, even when it brings relief to a serious medical situation. And, as in all losses, it involves the need to grieve, to mourn, to say goodbye, and eventually to go on living with a new life.

I believe that every woman undergoing hysterectomy needs to deal with loss as an issue and needs to do this within the context of loving, understanding friendships, male and female. Perhaps if priests and male religious better understood the medical and emotional ramifications of this surgical procedure, they would be more sensitive to the woman's need. Some of the comments from celibate men were comical and embarrasing, some were caring. Many priests did not know how to ask

I had become fixated at the grave, losing both a parent and my own parenting ability

questions and were uneasy in visiting or showing pastoral care. I realized that some men deal with female patients, especially those with "female problems," with some trepidation. Because hysterectomy is not uncommon in religious communities, sisters tend to project their experiences and expectations on one another, especially regarding recuperation, in the form of advice or questions. With some women religious, having rallied and returned to ministry within three weeks becomes the ultimate badge of courage. At times, returning to activity has been considered indicative of a real religious who doesn't baby herself.

RECOVERY TIME VARIES

Perhaps it is at this very time that a woman *needs* to baby herself. I say this respectfully, because a woman needs to grieve and face her loss. The impact of hysterectomy will affect women differently at different ages and stages of personal development; hence, there can be no set rules regulating time needed for recovery.

For me, talking out my anxieties was lifesaving; facing the issues of loss, very important; being affirmed as a woman, critical. My friends allowed me to be worried about being a woman first, a religious seondarily. I was never advised to go and pray, but rather to see and to find Christ within the experience. Some of the women in my community who had had hysterectomies were beautiful in their response, and I fully felt the ministry of like to like.

I did not face hysterectomy in one operation but, rather, over a course of time and in three operations. That did not enable me to deal any better with the issues; on the contrary, it probably created an attitude of denial and prolonged the mourning process. I believe that the Lord deals with me most clearly in the present human situation and that only in the context of strong friendships have I come to face the depth of loss. If I did not love humanly, I would not realize the close interrelation-

ship of my body, my self, and ultimately, my soul.

I have buried my uterus, yet my soul and spirit have been resurrected, comfortable with being woman, mother, and lover. I have come to understand my own productiveness, fear of barrenness, and desire to be creative. I had allowed myself to operate out of a framework of barrenness, and despite my creativity I was influenced by my own fears of inadequacy and unfruitfulness. I can now be mother earth, warm, yielding, productive, embracing: the symbol of reproduction. And I can also love the same mother earth who in winter is frigid, unyielding, barren, quiet, and solitary, the still-unresolved issues within.

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CANCER AFTER FORTY

After you have turned 40, assuming you have had no symptoms of cancer, the American Cancer Society suggests these steps:

(1) Women should have their doctor examine their breasts every year and do it themselves every month. Between the ages of 40 and 50, a woman should ask her doctor about the advisability of a breast x-ray; after 50 a mammogram is definitely recommended every year. (Factors that increase the risk of breast cancer are a personal or family history of the disease, never having had children, or giving birth to a first child after age 30.)

(2) To detect uterine cancer a pelvic examination should be performed by a doctor every year, and a Pap smear done at least every three years if the first two tests (a year apart) were negative. (Factors increasing the risk of cervical cancer are intercourse begun at an early age and multiple sex partners.) Women should have a biopsy at menopause if they are at risk regarding endometrial cancer. (The factors heightening risk are infertility, obesity, failure to ovulate, abnormal uterine bleeding, and estrogen therapy.)

(3) For early detection of colon and rectum malignancies a digital rectal examination should be performed annually, a guaiac test to spot hidden blood in the stool done every year after age 50, and a proctoscopic examination carried out every three to five years after age 50, provided the first two examinations, a year apart, were negative. (Risk is heightened if there is a personal or family history of cancer, of polyps in these areas, or of ulcerative colitis.)

Two Models of Novitiate

PATRICK SEAN MOFFETT, C.F.C., Ph. D.

T hroughout the world, religious congregations of men and women in their chapters, assemblies, councils, and formation teams struggle to reach consensus about the criteria for "novitiate readiness." As the moment of decision approaches, consensus often yields to democracy, and a vote establishes the paradigm for the next few years. Some are delighted, some are resigned, and others are committed to gathering evidence from formation fallout that will lead to a more enlightened decision the next time around.

Arguments do not seem to change much the next time around. A few more articles; the latest statements from the bishops or the Vatican; and a number of new insights into the Second Vatican Council's *Decree on the Appropriate Renewal of the Religious Life (Perfectae Caritatis)*, the order's constitutions and statutes, the life of the founder, and the New Testament are introduced into the debate. Proponents using the same texts to support their opposite positions are not unusual. Nor is it surprising, since we find ourselves living with individuals in the same religious order who have adopted divergent models of what constitutes a novitiate.

Although risking oversimplification, in an effort to highlight distinguishing features I will describe two models of novitiate that I have come to recognize while listening to deliberations about formation. I will label these models the *novitiate for decision* and the *novitiate for initiation*. Each model satisfies the norms for novitiates as articulated by the Sacred Congregation for Religious and for Secular Institutes in the documents *Instruction on the Renewal of Religious Formation, Religious and Human Promotion*, and *The Contemplative Dimensions of Religious Life*. However, acceptance of one model rather than the other leads to very different conclusions about the criteria for novitiate readiness, the content of the novitiate program, and the expected outcomes of the novitiate experience.

DIFFERENCE IN CANDIDATES

The novitiate for decision is the model employed by groups admitting candidates who have successfully addressed most of the ordinary growth issues of later adolescence. These candidates have come to a healthy integration of their roles as young adults, Christians, and church members, and they now seek to define a lifestyle that expresses a lifetime commitment to the Lord. The novitiate is one of the final steps in this decision, or discernment, process.

According to this model, a person comes to the novitiate with experience in prayer, with a good background in theology and scriptural studies, with the ego strengths necessary for attaining and sustaining an authentic sense of identity, and with the desire to serve the Lord. During the novitiate

of decision, a person experiences an environment conducive to serious reflection, discernment, and contemplation; advanced direction in the ways of the spiritual life; and an intense spiritual journey that leads to making a final commitment to the Lord in this institute.

The novitiate for initiation represents a model employed by groups accepting candidates earlier in the discernment process, usually after a probationary period during which the congregation and the individual seek assurance that the candidate is, as stated in the *Instruction on the Renewal of Religious Formation*, "endowed with such elements of human and emotional maturity as will afford grounds for hope that he/she is capable of undertaking properly the obligations of the religious state, and that in the religious life and especially in the novitiate, he/she will be able to progress toward fuller maturity."

Serving an introductory function, the novitiate for initiation is designed to facilitate decision about remaining in religious life. A person comes to it with (1) a fundamental background in basic Christian doctrine, (2) a desire to learn about spiritual matters, (3) a request for instruction, direction, and an opportunity to enter more deeply into prayer, (4) the ego strengths necessary for retaining and sustaining an authentic sense of identity, and (5) a desire to serve the Lord.

In the novitiate for initiation one experiences a quieting down that leads to greater availability to the interior life, an introduction to various ways of promoting the spiritual life, and the beginning steps of a process leading ultimately toward a permanent commitment but more immediately to temporary profession.

CONTRARY RESPONSES ELICITED

The ways in which these models influence formation issues became clear to me as our province prepared for its chapter. Delegates chose to field-test a number of proposals, one of them a suggestion that candidates must complete college before entering the novitiate. We presently accept candidates after they finish secondary school. They enter a postulancy of one or two years, then make application for the novitiate. As a result, many of our novices are nineteen years old. A survey of the young men who have completed this program and of their superiors and high school principals revealed a high level of confidence in the effectiveness of the process. Men whose theoretical model is a novitiate for initiation considered these data to be supportive of their position, whereas those whose theoretical model is a novitiate for decision asked if there might not be a better way.

The strongest reaction to the proposal came from the scholastics who had completed the novitiate in the past year or two. They were disturbed by the implications they read into the proposal, namely, that they had not made a real novitiate; that they should not be under vows; that gaps existed in their psychosexual development. They responded by articulating their novitiate experience in the language and concepts of the theology and psychology courses in which they were engaged. First, they spent a day discussing and reflecting on the proposals of the new chapter and responded in particular to the Vocation/Formation Committee's third proposal, which read: "That there be a gradual introduction to the life of the brothers through the years of candidacy and postulancy and that the novitiate year be made after a candidate has completed college." The students cited several perceived considerations that may have influenced the committee's proposal, including concern about the maturity of the candidate, the need for adequate academic preparation, the possibility of group pressure to move someone along who had not received adequate preparation, and the need to be responsive to the needs of older candidates.

In a letter to the committee, the students addressed each point of concern: They maintained that (1) development of a healthy sense of identity involves growth within a chosen context, but extension of the prenovitiate period would make the self-identification process more difficult; (2) the novitiate is only the beginning of spiritual experience and theological study; (3) although peer pressure existed in the houses of formation, support structures were in place to ensure that such pressure did not interfere with an individual's formation; (4) the novitiate process should be flexible enough to allow for the admission of both older and younger candidates; and (5) a fifty percent attrition rate within the first two years was a strong indicator that the novitiate was an effective discernment process.

In concluding their message to the committee, these young scholastics wrote,

> Our apprehension toward an extended prenovitiate program grows out of a feeling that without the full experience of the novitiate, early on, a candidate may become discouraged, impatient, and disinterested. The novitiate year has been a key element in the process of discerning vocation for us. It seems unfair to have a candidate prepare himself for four years only to find through the novitiate experience that he is perhaps not called to be a Christian Brother.
>
> Our experience of formation, over all, has been a good one. It has been flexible enough that we have felt comfortable in our movement from postulancy to novitiate to scholasticate. The current program has provided the time, the space, and the needed encouragement to allow us to pursue our vocation. Had the proposed program been in place when we entered, we wonder whether we would have been able to follow the call.

TWO MODELS OF NOVITIATE

	BEFORE ENTRANCE	AFTER ENTRANCE	
1	Candidacy College Theology Professional Preparation	Postulancy Novitiate for Decision Apostolic Engagement	
2	Candidacy	Postulancy Novitiate for Initiation College Theology Professional Preparation Apostolic Engagement	**FINAL RELIGIOUS PROFESSION**
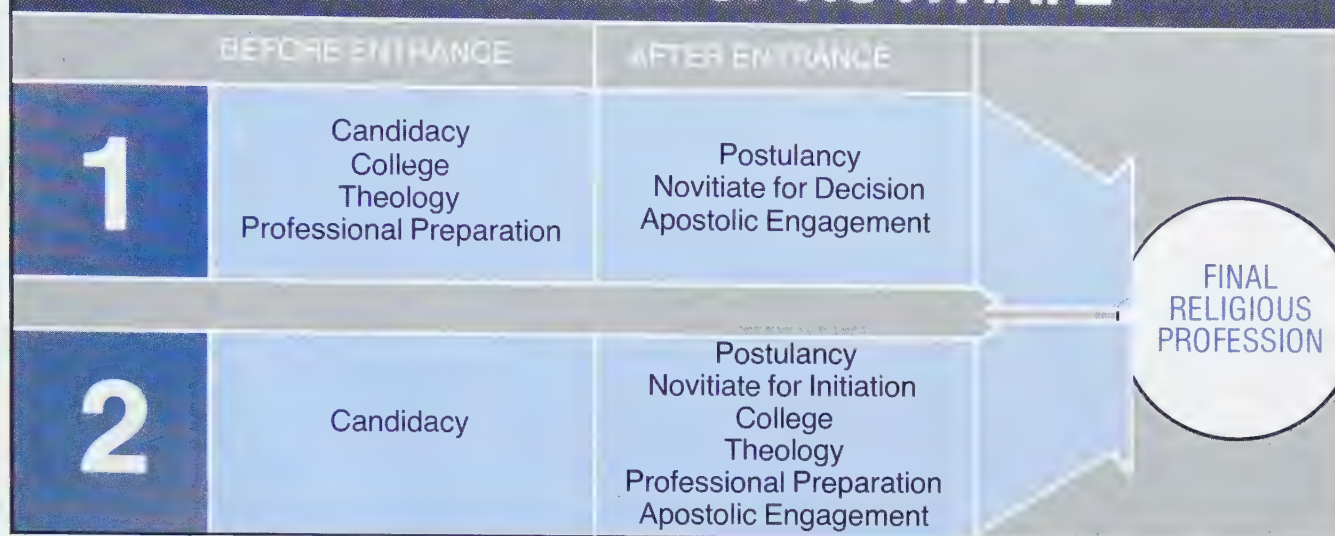
The staffs of the houses of formation found that the discussion evoked by the chapter proposal did not alter their support for a novitiate for initiation, but it did help to clarify their understanding of the six- to seven-year formative process leading to a final commitment and gave them an even greater appreciation of the significance of the postnovitiate years for both the younger and the older (post-college) brother.

INTEGRATION IS GOAL

In 1965, the Vatican II *Decree on the Appropriate Renewal of Religious Life* addressed the issue of postnovitiate formation: "Religious men other than clerics, and religious women as well, should not be assigned to apostolic works immediately after the novitiate. In suitable residences and in a fitting manner, let them continue their training in religious life and the apostolate in doctrine and technical matters." At that time, the great majority of our brothers used the postnovitiate years to complete their college degrees and teacher training programs, whereas those who were assigned to ministry immediately after novitiate found themselves in communities with a number of junior professed. Now, however, as the number of candidates who complete college prior to novitiate is increasing, and the number of junior professed in each community is decreasing, we have to pay greater attention to the ways young religious work toward a healthy integration of the spiritual, affective, cognitive, social, communal, and apostolic dimensions of their lives.

This integration process is a variation on a theme that is evident in all stages of human development. For the Christian, such integration begins in bap-

tism. Baptism is the first of a series of events or "rites of passage" that signify gradual incorporation into the life work and spirit of the church. The Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults stresses the need to view these passages as processes rather than events. The rites themselves are events that signify the realization of various stages within these processes.

There are also passages and rites within religious life. I view the two proposed models of novitiate as falling within the context of a process leading to permanent commitment that is expressed in the rite of final profession.

MATURITY NOT PREREQUISITE

I am personally not convinced that theologians, social scientists, and specialists in religious life have provided sufficient data or insight for choosing between the two models. Most of these would, I assume, agree that priority must be given to the total development of the individual as a human being, as a follower of Jesus Christ, as a church member, and as a member of a particular religious congregation. I have sensed some ambiguity as to whether this priority is one of emphasis or of sequence. A sequential interpretation would suggest that human growth is a prerequisite for accepting Christ and his gospel message; that commitment to Christ as personal Savior is a prerequisite for church membership; that confirmed effective incorporation into the Catholic church is a prerequisite for religious life. Our experience in terms of church membership softens these requirements from prerequisites to corequisites. In baptising infants and confirming adolescents, we make a strong statement that one is free to "grow up" in

> **I am not convinced that the process of Christian maturation need be accomplished outside the congregation**

the church. But how much growing up can take place in a religious congregation? Some would require human, psychological, affective, and spiritual maturities as prerequisites for religious life. I am not convinced that the process of Christian maturation need be accomplished outside the congregation.

Obviously a formation program that inhibits development in any one of these directions could not claim to be serving well the individual, church, or religious congregation. Vows, community horarium, constitutions, statutes, and customs are various means developed and refined over the years by our predecessors to facilitate the living expression of our vocation. Such structures and processes are meant to foster growth and development within religious life. We have the means to effect change in them when any of these elements are found to be inappropriate. Failure to make such changes is a disservice to ourselves and to those who follow us.

MEMBERSHIP BRINGS GROWTH

Joining any group is a way of extending the self, and joining a religious congregation is a particularly significant extension of a person's self-definition. One is thereby seeking to make the congregation's work, spirit, customs, and history one's own. At the same time the individual is attempting to attain and sustain a unique sense of self. The externals of membership do not become the structures of the self; rather, they are the supports and guides that are used (but may be abandoned) in the

process of *becoming*. In the language of psychologist Gorden Allport, one commits himself or herself—by joining a congregation—to "propriate" activities that foster the integration and unity of one's personality.

While any novitiate involves both initiation and decision making, a novitiate for decision emphasizes the personal development and spiritual commitment of the young religious, and the novitiate for initiation stresses communal dimensions in terms of both ego extension and group belonging. After novitiate, personal spirituality and group belonging continue to be lifelong issues for all religious.

A novice master with twenty-five years of experience added the following insights concerning these two models of novitiate:

> Something is not present with sufficient emphasis in either model. That something is Christ's activity on the soul. It is Christ who forms his disciples. The call is not complete until the soul receives a special insight: Depart from me Lord, for I am a sinful man. I call this an illumination, and I see the need for a *novitiate of illumination*. This probably could fit in either the novitiate for initiation or the novitiate for decision. It requires two things to my mind—contemplation and close experience with the poor—to enable the novice to put on the mind of Christ without any outside pressure from family, courses, etc. The stages might then become initiation, decision, illumination, and effulgence.

The presence in the church of fulfilled individuals who entered religious life at an early age along with others who entered much later may be evidence of the remarkable adaptability of the human organism, the mercy of a provident God, or the relative health of our way of life. Most founders of religious congregations, if they made a canonical novitiate, made a novitate for decision. Many of those who followed them made a novitiate for initiation. It seems both possible and desirable for the church's individual congregations to maintain both options in the spirit of St. Paul, who "welcomed all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ quite openly and unhindered." (Acts 28:30–31).

INTENTIONAL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

An Early-Stage Report On a College's Initial Attempt

STEPHANIE R. WERNIG, Ph.D.

Developing leaders for tomorrow's society is a critical responsibility of higher education in America. Administrators at Regis College in Denver have taken this responsibility seriously and created a number of opportunities for leadership development among the students; these include $1,000 stipends that are awarded to freshmen on the basis of their high-school activities and perceived leadership potential. Preparing leaders for the nation and the world fits well with the College's heritage, which encourages Regis, like other educational institutions run by the Jesuits, to "pour into the social order capable leaders in numbers large enough to lead it effectively for good" (*Monumenta Ignatiana*, Epistle IV).

Concern for this task prompted the president of Regis College, Reverend David M. Clarke, S.J., to challenge Dr. Dennis Vidoni, Director of Regis' Counseling/Career Center, and me to construct an intentional developmental program for our future students. We began during the 1980–1981 academic year by undertaking an analysis of our students in order to determine their personal needs. To accomplish this, we took the data from the American Council on Education/University of California at Los Angeles Freshman Survey of students entering Regis in 1980, compared them with data of those in the control group (Catholic colleges with similar admissions criteria) and looked at the results of both surveys within the framework of educational psychologist Arthur Chickering's "developmental tasks," as presented in *Education and Identity* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1969). This exercise enabled us to understand student behaviors and the opportunities already existing at the College that meet students' developmental needs.

With this new information about the prototypic Regis student in hand, we undertook the task of educating Regis parents, trustees, administrators, faculty, and staff about the developmental requirements of young adults, and familiarizing them with the resources that exist at Regis to meet these needs. We felt that if this task could be accomplished, our students could be better served.

About this same time, in the spring of 1981, the Board of Trustees established the National Commission on the Future of Regis College and directed that one of the nine task forces study the ways in which the College affected the development of leadership potential in its young adult students ("Educating for Leadership," HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, Fall 1983). The work of the task force resulted in fifty-eight recommendations for enhancing leadership development.

We concentrated on three key sentences in the report:

> Students are not shaped passively into leaders. They must want to develop their leadership skills and must be encouraged to identify goals and seize opportunities to lead. . . . Since it is often difficult for students to appraise their own level of maturity and competence and to chart realistic goals, it may be beneficial for them to seek mature advice to help evaluate their own progress in developing as leaders.

Using these, we began to redefine the goals we were intending to emphasize, our method of delivery, and the outcomes we had proposed. We had orig-

LEADERSHIP– DEVELOPMENT AREAS

a healthy lifestyle

a sense of purpose

aesthetic awareness

interpersonal skills

intellectual competence

multicultural awareness and tolerance

moral, ethical, and spiritual development
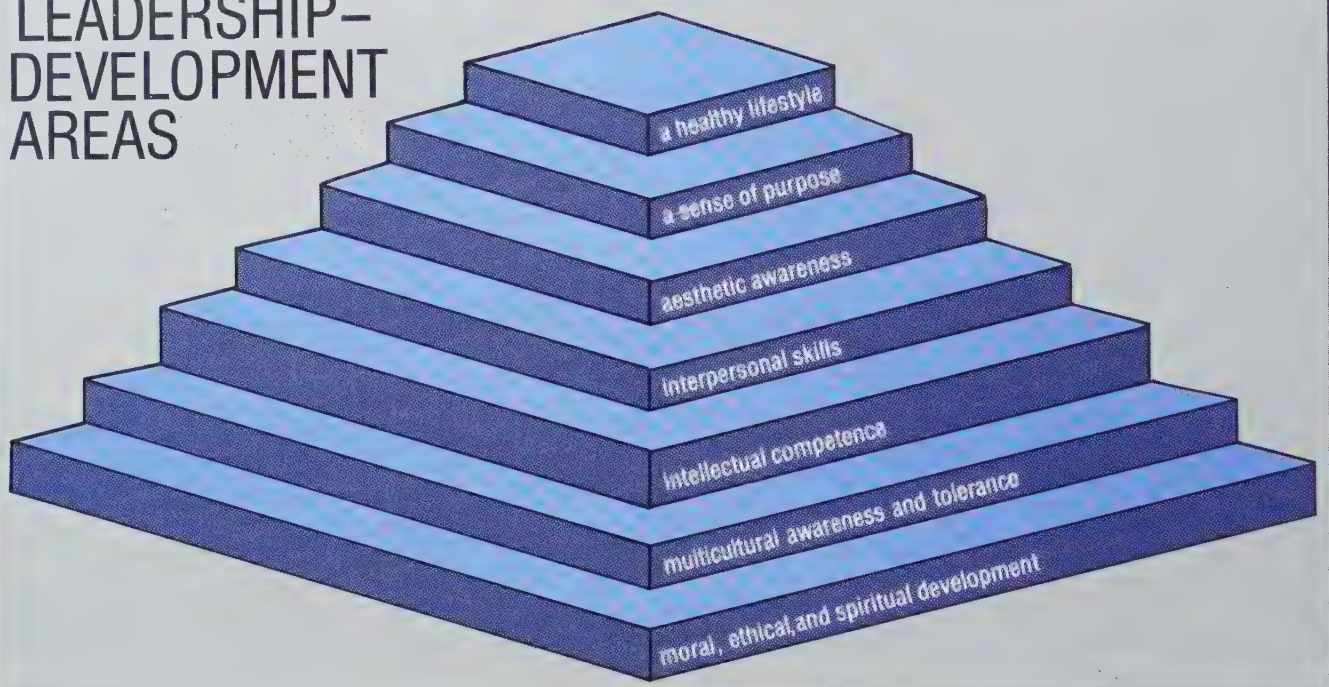
inally used achievement of Chickering's developmental tasks (achieving competence, managing emotions, developing autonomy, establishing identity, freeing interpersonal relationships, clarifying purpose, and developing integrity) as the benchmarks of growth. Although these areas of development are certainly important, we were not sure that they adequately reflected the Regis mission.

After considerable analysis and discussion, we concluded that to participate effectively in tomorrow's society, the future leader does need to be competent intellectually and to have developed interpersonal skills and a sense of purpose. In order to participate effectively in the world society we live in, however, the future leader also needs to appreciate the perspectives offered by those of different cultures and gender. He or she needs to appreciate the arts and to realize the importance of living a healthful lifestyle, both for personal development and in order to be an example to others. Most important, future leaders will need to have a reflective value system in order to make the ethical and moral decisions that will be thrust upon them. As a result of our deliberations, we established the following developmental tasks to be emphasized in the Regis College leadership program: achieving intellectual competence; developing interpersonal skills; acquiring a sense of purpose; developing multicultural awareness and tolerance; acquiring aesthetic awareness; establishing a healthful lifestyle; and achieving moral, ethical, and spiritual development.

Those freshmen that we are accepting into the program will work with a trained member of the

Regis staff so that they can (1) establish goals for personal growth and development as a leader; (2) learn to identify and evaluate specific experiences, both inside and outside the classroom, to meet their goals; (3) meet with successful leaders from the Regis and Denver communities to compare experiences; (4) learn to document their progress toward their goals; and (5) choose the direction of their future.

The specifics of the three-year program, as it already operates, involve the students' meeting with their "mentors" on an individual basis a minimum of three times during each semester. The object of this meeting is to discuss goals and their methods of attaining these goals. Students attend gatherings twice during the semester to meet with successful leaders in the Regis and Denver communities in order to glean ideas and strategies for leadership. They also personally evaluate, in a few paragraphs, the progress that they have made each year toward the personal goals that were established.

The benefits of this program to the student are anticipated to be fivefold. Students will (1) establish a significant relationship with an educator from within the Regis community; (2) know the level of their own competence as a leader and their potential for further personal growth; (3) learn to identify the resources at Regis and elsewhere that will enhance their development; (4) be better prepared to assess their future lives on a continuing basis, thereby becoming more aware citizens; and (5) be able to show prospective employers a record of personal growth, achievements in new

situations, and the advantage of their employment.

This written record of personal growth is an important part of the program. We know that various experiences during the college years, both curricular and cocurricular, can facilitate an individual's personal growth. Some achievements, such as making the Dean's List, receiving a varsity letter, or election to office by peers, are more visible and thereby more easily documented. There are also other experiences or efforts that, if documented, would show an endeavor to grow in a particular developmental area.

As not all students can achieve the Dean's List, receive a varsity letter, or be elected to office, we believe that these experiences or efforts, whether they comprise special courses (e.g., to expand multicultural awareness), volunteer experiences (e.g., to help develop interpersonal relationships), a workshop on career decisions (to contribute to a sense of purpose), or participation in a bible-study group (contributing to moral, ethical, and spiritual development), should be recorded in a carefully described way.

Various instruments of assessment are available to the program participant and his or her mentor to help determine the student's current level of development in each area of concern. It is the mentor's role to help the student decide which area(s) to work on during the year and what experiences will best meet the goal(s) established.

For this present year, four of the five mentors are members of the College's student-life staff who are already familiar with human development theories. Because faculty involvement is key to the fu-

Future leaders will need to have a reflective value system in order to make the ethical and moral decisions that will be thrust upon them

ture of the program, the Director of Academic Advising (who is also familiar with such theories) will also serve as a mentor.

The intentional leadership development program is being conducted on an experimental basis during the 1983–1984 academic year, and only thirty freshmen are allowed to participate. We believe, however, that this program will provide the participants with a systematic method of progression toward the goals of a mature individual. The system will no doubt be revised as we work through the year, but it represents an attempt to institute a tangible program for leadership development in our students and further fulfill the mission of Regis College.

DIMENSIONS OF DEVELOPMENT

MOST REVEREND ANGELO FERNANDEZ, D.D.
ARCHBISHOP OF NEW DELHI, INDIA

Editor's note: The following remarks were delivered by Archbishop Fernandez to open a recent workshop conducted in New Delhi by four members of the staff of the Jesuit Educational Center for Human Development, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Beneath all the problems of humankind today, whether in the church or outside, the one crucial problem is the immaturity of so many people.

So too, the problem of renewal in the church is a problem of the *person* and the inner dynamic *growth process* that has to take into account not only our conscious behavior but also our unconscious depths, where all the real obstacles are to be found.

Any effort, then, that contributes to the remaking of human beings, to maturity and responsible living, toward helping people grow to personhood with love as the inner movement of life, must be heartily welcomed. It is very much in line with the revolution with regard to person that is one of the objectives of the Second Vatican Council.

The responsible use of power, so necessary for today's world, will emerge, we hope, as a desirable consequence. In this context it is imperative that along with the spiritual and psychological factors, the moral aspects of personality development and the communitarian dimension of responsibility for human behavior in society receive adequate and pointed attention.

Against the background of the underdevelopment that is rife in this country and the world, and of the interdependence of individuals and nations in our little global village, a greater measure of responsibility must figure prominently in the personality and character development of persons and peoples. This should apply equally to problem solving and to the general process of Christian becoming and growth.

If a Christian is one who is responsible for others, one of the byproducts of human development programs should perforce lead to greater social awareness and, it is hoped, make a dent in the current structures that perpetuate inequalities and injustices at all levels of life around the world. By the same token, a sense of Christian mission, reaching out beyond ourselves and actualizing God's love in the world, must preclude any narcissism or preoccupation with self-realization in isolation.

Doubtless, the Kingdom is within us, but the presence of the Spirit of the Risen Lord must be made manifest in all people and in the world. It must find expression in life, in our words and actions, in all our relationships within the Christian community, and with all our brothers and sisters who in some mysterious way are related to the paschal mystery.

If we must stay in touch with our senses and emotions, we must also stay in touch with present-day realities that challenge us at every moment in one way or another. We also need the constant reminder of life's most foundational fact—God's unconditional love for each and all of us to be experienced in ever-increasing measure from day to day. "The love I speak of is not our love for God, but the love He showed to us in sending His Son as the remedy for the defilement of our sins" (1 Jn 4:10).

That, in effect, is a call to undergird the process of human development with a deep spirit of prayer and a picking up of the emotions of childhood and the intellection of adolescence, bringing both to what Baron von Hugel called a "silent transcendence," an ongoing conversion to God, a loving turning toward him with each and all in one's heart, an experience at an ever-new level where no questions need to be asked.

As Alexander Solzhenitsyn says, "men have forgotten God." The failings of a human consciousness deprived of its divine dimension have been a determining factor in all the major crimes of this century. Only when we reach out with determination for the warm hand of God can the errors of the unfortunate twentieth century be set right.

In the face of the deepening social and spiritual crisis of modern civilization, we need to reflect, evaluate, and find a path beyond the crisis. Spirituality will have to be at the core of the answer, but its energies will have to permeate the life-size questions that confront us.

We are being called, at this moment, to "silent transcendence," to give a fresh impetus and elan to full human development and the wedding of faith and justice.

Caring Behavior In Community

CHARLES SHELTON, S.J., M.Div.

Several weeks ago I was sitting at the breakfast table. A fellow community member mentioned to me his need for a ride to the airport at a somewhat early hour. There were several of us present, and three of the five sitting at the table volunteered. In contrast to that situation, I found myself several days later attempting to avoid being part of a larger community-wide call for volunteers to help prepare a community-wide function. Over the past few weeks I have often reflected on the difference in my responses. Moreover, I have discovered that I am not alone, inasmuch as my peers, in a similar way, are subject to these vagaries when showing caring behavior toward other community members.

As a member of a religious community I am committed to creating a communal environment where religious men and women can interact at levels that foster and nurture caring behaviors that sustain healthy and loving community life. Additionally, though, as a student of human behavior I am intrigued by human and environmental factors that sustain human care and concern in communities that with the grace of God share the experience of the ideal community described by Vatican Council II:

> As Christ's members living fraternally together, let them excel one another in showing respect (cf. Rom 12:10), and let each carry the other's burdens (cf. Gal 6:2). For thanks to God's love poured into hearts by the Holy Spirit (cf. Rom 5:5), a religious community is a true family gathered together in the Lord's name and rejoicing in His presence (cf. Mt 18:20).

The thesis of this article is that there are factors that concretely influence a member's capacity for "showing respect" and "carrying the other's burden." Consequently, by paying close attention to these influencing factors, it is possible to facilitate the care and concern members of religious communities are called to show one another.

PERSPECTIVES ESSENTIALLY DIFFERENT

Approaches to community interactions have usually adopted one of two perspectives. The first perspective views the community's interactions in personalist-individualistic terms. This perspective adopts a psychodynamic orientation. Thus, questions tend to center on the individual's personal psychological state, addressing such matters as "Why is he so compulsive with his work?" "She is really depressed, and it seems to be affecting everything she does." "I feel so much anxiety at community meetings." A personalist-individualistic perspective focuses on (a) the needs and behaviors of individual members, (b) the consequences of individual behaviors on the larger community, and (c) the dysfunctioning of individual members.

A second perspective for exploring community interactions is the "macro-systems" approach, which views communal interactions within the broader confines of the group. This approach is concerned with such issues as "What are the goals of our community life together?" "What is the quality of our community?" "The tone of that meeting last evening seemed to be tense." The focus of the macro-systems approach is on (a) the

An innate capacity for
caring actively balances
the human tendency to be
hostile and aggressive

group, (b) the consequences of community actions for the community, and (c) the quality of communication within the group as well as the goals that the community adopts.

The limitations of both the personalist-individualistic and the macro-systems approaches are twofold. First, neither approach focuses on the possibilities for care and concern that can arise from each member's interaction with the community. Second, there is the need to discuss functionally sound environmental conditions that actively create living conditions that encourage caring behaviors to develop. In other words, what are the actual environmental and social influences that foster caring behaviors within the community?

A PROSOCIAL APPROACH

Bearing in mind these two approaches and their limitations, I would like to offer a third approach, a "prosocial" perspective. This approach is integrative, i.e., it encourages specific types of behavior among members of a religious community in light of both their individual characteristics and developmental levels and the distinct environmental and social conditions that can contribute to communal care and concern.

Prosocial behavior has emerged as a highly important topic in social psychological literature. Basically, research on prosocial (or altruistic) behavior focuses on the human capacity for caring and the optimum conditions that foster this care toward others. Although, admittedly, people at times engage in behaviors that benefit others for wholly selfish and self-seeking reasons, a considerable body of evidence maintains that there exists a capacity for caring and nurturance that is inherent within the human species. This innate capacity for caring actively balances what many behavioral specialists have previously discovered: the human tendency to be hostile and aggressive. In other words, there also exists within human expe-

rience a capacity for caring that blunts our all-too-willing dispositions to anger, to hurt, and to destroy one another.

This inborn tendency described in social psychology is enriched by the Catholic theological principle that "grace builds on nature." Consequently, the open response that each person gives to God's loving invitation of "self-communication" sustains and nourishes our innate capacity to behave in altruistic ways toward other community members.

My intention now is to present several themes from a prosocial perspective, with some clear counterparts from Christian experience. With this perspective, I hope that readers will discuss what themes need to be accentuated and what actions initiated to increase the caring and nurturance in their communities.

EMPATHY IS REQUIRED

A considerable body of social psychological research has concluded that empathy is a prerequisite for developing caring and nurturance. Psychologist Kenneth Clark defines empathy as "the unique capacity of the human being to feel the experiences, needs, aspirations, frustrations, sorrows, joy, anxieties, hurt, or hunger of others as if they were his or her own."

This empathic focus finds validation in St. Paul's protrayal of Jesus as the compassionate high priest whose own empathic sense is clear. "Since he was himself tested through what he suffered, he is able to help those who are tempted" (Heb 2:18) and "to deal patiently with erring sinners, for he himself is beset by weakness" (Heb 5:2).

Jesus' personal experience of weakness reflects his deep empathic sensitivity toward humanity's impoverishment. Likewise, members of religious communities who confront their own pain, weakness, and frailty can reach out to others with compassion. A sense of personal vulnerability enables us to focus compassionately on others who undergo similar struggles and trials. This awareness of our own weakness mirrors social psychology's insight that individuals who experience empathy are more inclined to behave compassionately toward others. Furthermore, studies indicate that empathy fosters altruistic behavior toward others. Thus, empathy serves as an important stimulus for Christian praxis. Consequently, for the religious community, the development of empathic understanding among community members can result in a nurturing attentiveness toward other members.

ROLE TAKING HELPFUL

Human beings stimulate their empathic sense when they vicariously experience the pains and hurts of others. In psychological literature this is

THE PROSOCIAL APPROACH TO CARING BEHAVIOR IN COMMUNITY

MODELING · ROLE TAKING · VALUES · COMMUNITY SIZE · EMPATHY · SIMILARITY · SELF-CONFIDENCE · SELF-ESTEEM
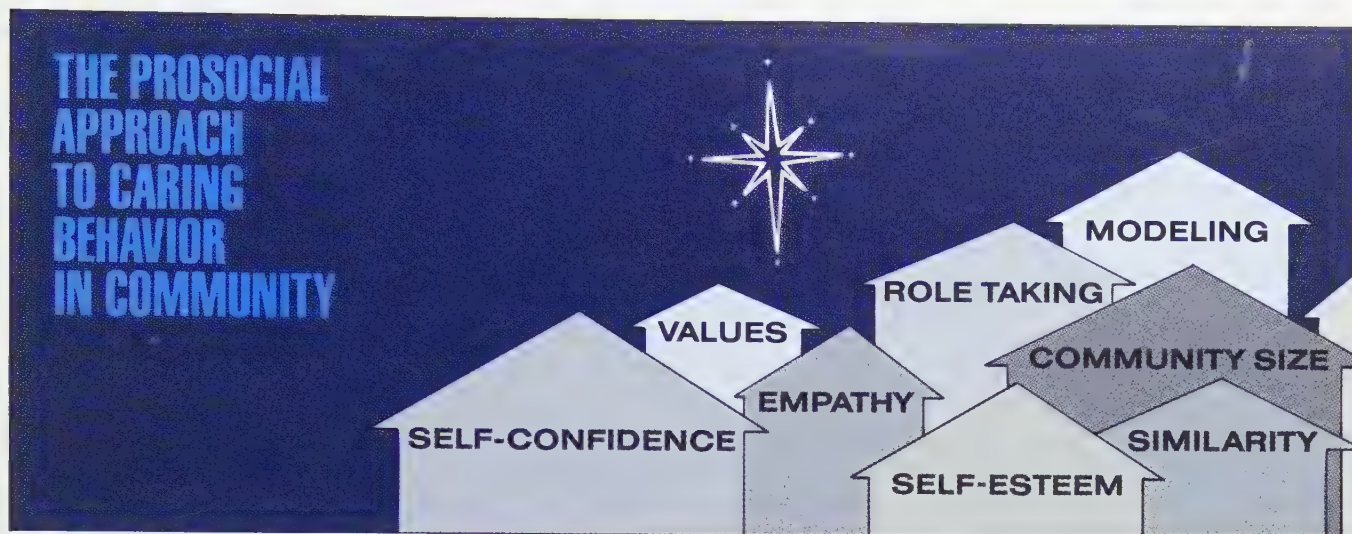
known as role taking; that is, one can cognitively and affectively experience aspects of the other's situation. In effect, role taking actualizes one's empathic capacity, and as a result, occasions the requisite behaviors that stimulate nurturing concern for others.

Concretely, then, community interactions need to focus on an awareness of individual members—both who they are and what they are experiencing. Accurate perceptions of another's life situation allows for the awakening of one's own empathic tendencies. In addition, individuals should be encouraged to actively participate in the lives of other community members. Openly sharing with another creates a familiarity that makes it possible to experience the pains and hurts of other community members by activating one's own role-taking capacity.

COMMUNITY SIZE IMPORTANT

Social psychological literature conclusively demonstrates that the size of the group has a direct bearing on the human tendency to respond in caring ways toward others. Large numbers of people can create a "diffusion of responsibility." This state is characterized by the absence of dependable behaviors. As a result, no one takes personal responsibility for prescribed duties or the behaviors of others. A struggling alcoholic who is not confronted with love by other community members, or a community car that continually breaks down because of the lack of proper maintenance are just two victims of a community's inadequate attention to proper accountability. "Someone else will do it" is an all-too-familiar echo in community thinking today.

It is true that no one can take a deeply personal interest in every community member. Yet every community member can take responsibility for *someone*. Religious community should contain men and women who have at least one other community member to whom they can turn when in need. A strong, healthy relationship between two members eases the sense of isolation and fosters a loyalty that encourages care and attentiveness toward others.

VALUES GUIDE BEHAVIOR

Further evidence of the fostering of caring behavior arises from the presence of positive human values. Values are defined here as core dispositions that provide normative guidance for who we are and what we are about. For Christians these values are reflected in the Decalogue, the Beatitudes, the fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22), and above all, discipleship with the Lord (Mt 16:24–28). Values, according to social psychological theory, are personal monitors of behavior. Behaviors consonant with one's value system become internal reinforcers and signify one's ethical ideals; this aids in construction of a definition of the self that seeks and creates self-consistency of one's attitudes and actions.

Members of religious communities need to review their value systems and the ways personal behaviors reflect these values. Time for solitude, self-examination, shared reflection, and group discussion are important preparations for consciously articulating one's core. The more conscious the person is of his or her value system, the more likely it is that the person will display these values through personal action.

MAINTAINING SELF-ESTEEM

Individuals must have a healthy sense of themselves before they can be altruistic. Unrequited needs or personal insecurities inhibit caring behavior toward others. Studies indicate that individuals who have high self-esteem are most inclined to be aware of and sensitive to the needs and

hurts of others, because they are less preoccupied with themselves. They have less need to be defensive and can, as a result, focus their energies outwardly toward others.

To assess the level of self-esteem in their members, religious communities should examine the way they carry out their functions. Are community services (performed by superiors, ministers, members of finance committees, etc.) done freely and responsibly without attempts to acquire self-esteem by exploiting one's role in the community? Or, on the other hand, are the apostolic works of individual community members influenced by the need to compensate for feelings of personal inadequacy? The community must focus on how individual members are affirmed within the community so that self-esteem might be maintained. Community members who lack nurturant relationships lose a fundamental source for self-worth, and a community that does not recognize the contributions of its members gradually loses them.

MODELING CAN INSPIRE

All of us are more likely to show care for and to aid one another when respected authorities and others we admire behave in caring and attentive ways. Superiors, ministers, and those we esteem who offer themselves in service to their brothers and sisters encourage others to spend themselves in selfless service. I can vividly recall an example from my own teaching days at a Jesuit high school. While at supper, I noticed that the Provincial (who was paying his yearly visit) had stood up and was walking around serving coffee to other community members. I remember that when I finished my supper, I offered to take up the plates of several other men who were also finished, a task that is not expected and that I rarely performed. Although not recognizing it at the time, I realized upon later reflection that the Provincial's example stimulated my own prosocial act. It is highly likely that each of us influences the lives of several other commu-

nity members. Consequently, priority should be given to reflecting on the effects (which are often unintended) our actions have on others.

SELF-CONFIDENCE CONTRIBUTES

A sense of personal competence is an important ingredient of altruistic behavior. If I believe myself to be a competent and functioning member of the community, then I am more disposed to use my gifts to aid others. Paul's eloquent reflections on the gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor 12) are a valuable contribution to a sense of self-confidence. Thus, to commit myself to a role within the apostolate and to give myself openly, freely, and fully to that role (as teacher, superior, administrator) encourages a growing sense of personal competence that allows me greater mastery of my environment. In turn, this increased sense of competence results in greater assertiveness and action to aid others within the environment. When this personal activity blends with gospel values, then the person is capable of greater selfless care in his or her community.

SIMILARITY FOSTERS SHARING

There tends to be a strong relationship between similarity and caring behavior. Research shows that we are more likely to aid those who are like us. No doubt members of a community share many common experiences, e.g., living accommodations, apostolic goals, values and ideals. Yet quite often these ideals and common experiences are unacknowledged. Informed dialogue and shared interaction help religious to reflect on their common goals and vision. Equally important is self-disclosure, which allows others to experience our personal joys and sufferings and the pilgrimage that each of us makes on our journey to the Lord. Intimate communication fosters a bond that elicits affective admiration and an increasing capacity for continuing self-donation (cf. Phil 2:6).

CHECKLIST FOR SELF-EXAMINATION

The following checklist (or prosocial examen) summarizes the relationship between psychological variables and community caring behaviors that mirror the call of the gospel. I hope these questions will stimulate the reader to reflect on whether his or her life is using to the utmost everyday human experiences that can reinforce caring behaviors that are the hallmark for religious life today.

1. What are the particular experiences with which I most empathize when I am relating to others? Do I see my own sufferings and hurts in the lives of other community members around me? How

do I reach out to them? When I am distressed over another's situation, how do I handle this distress?

2. Am I sufficiently attentive to the needs of others, so that I can vicariously experience their hurts? Does the extent of my involvement with others within the community allow me to be involved in their lives? Am I adequately open with others within the community, so that they can be aware of my needs?

3. How do I hold myself responsible to this community? To individuals within the community? Are there at least a few members of this community to whom I am loyal, responsible, and attentive? Likewise, are there others within the community to whom I can turn for both support and loving challenge?

4. What are the Christian values I cherish? How do I act them out in the community? In what specific ways might my behaviors be made more consistent with my values? Upon whom within the community do I focus these behaviors?

5. Are my behaviors toward other community members based on a freeing and selfless giving, or might there be other possible motives that underly my behaviors? Are there particular responses I seek when I care for others?

6. Whom do I influence in the community? What are the effects of this influence? Whom do I admire in the community? For what reasons do I admire these people? How might the experience of knowing me make others more caring?

7. What are my talents? How do I put these talents to use for others within the community? For ex-

ample, if I have the talent to write, does this lead me to encourage others to write and help them with constructive criticism? If I have the gift of mechanical dexterity, does it lead me to offer this service to others less adept?

8. What are the common experiences, visions, and goals that I share with those whom I live with? How do these similarities lead me to anticipate the needs and hurts of others? Do I willingly enter into experiences that allow me to open up and be known by others? What are the strengths and weaknesses of my shared experiences? How are they used?

Community life is neither an ethereal ideal nor simply mundane living. Rather, life in community is an incarnational encounter in which we proclaim through our earthly existence the coming of God's Kingdom. By being sensitive to and aware of the human conditions that allow us to care for each other, we help to create a world where that Kingdom becomes more real.

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Exploring Christotherapy

Interview with Bernard Tyrrell, S.J., Ph.D.

Father Bernard Tyrrell, S.J., Ph.D., is a professor of philosophy and religious studies at Gonzaga University, Spokane, Washington. He is the author of *Christotherapy* (Seabury, 1975), which has been translated into Spanish, French, Italian, and German, and *Christotherapy II* (Paulist, 1982). Father Tyrrell brings his expertise as a philosopher and theologian, his personal struggles with alcoholism, his study of psychology, and his years of priestly counseling and spiritual direction to the development of Christotherapy, a practical wedding of sound principles of psychology and Christian spirituality. Father Tyrrell lectures on Christotherapy at universities, in parishes, at retreat centers, and to physicians, nurses, spiritual directors, counselors, and lay people. The following interview was conducted for HUMAN DEVELOPMENT by Mitch Finley, M.A.

HD: Father Tyrrell, what is Christotherapy?
Tyrrell: Christotherapy is a method of facilitating psychological and spiritual healing and growth in oneself and others with God's help. Its origins lie in my own experience of going through therapy with Dr. Thomas Hora, a New York psychiatrist who, although not a Catholic, was profoundly influenced by the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, as well as by eastern religious traditions.

HD: Why did you seek counseling from Dr. Hora?
Tyrrell: I chose Dr. Hora because he was a physician and could therefore prescribe medications; I thought he would just write me a prescription for some medication that would solve everything. But he asked me why a priest, a Jesuit and a theologian, came to him for healing. He asked me why I didn't find it in Christ, and that really bowled me over. I kept going to Dr. Hora for about two years. His emphasis was on prayer and on bringing Christ and the life-giving truths and value Christ revealed into the therapeutic process. Hora started out as a strict Freudian analyst, but after years of studying and experiencing various spiritual traditions, Christ emerged for Hora as the perfect teacher and a paragon of wholeness. Dr. Hora has gone on to a more spiritualist phase now, and the differences between our two approaches are quite pronounced.

HD: What did you learn from Dr. Hora that was helpful in developing the principles of Christotherapy?
Tyrrell: He helped me to discover the importance of cultivating spiritual truths and values in order to nourish psychological and physical wholeness as well as spiritual growth. This had a profound impact on me, but I still had not come to grips with my drinking problem.

HD: What did you do about that?
Tyrrell: I had returned to Gonzaga and was teaching, but my drinking was having an adverse effect on the quality of my classes. Several of my friends got together and talked to the rector of the Jesuit community. He discussed the situation with me and with the provincial superior, and after I had spoken with my physician and with Dr. Hora, I decided to go to Guest House, an alcoholism treatment center for priests and brothers in Rochester, Minnesota. Going through the four-month program at Guest House was very helpful. The concept of alcoholism as a disease is the basis for the work that is done there, including the idea that alcoholism is rooted in a genetic predisposition rather than in psychological factors or moral degradation, although the latter can complicate the situation. Most important, Guest House employs a holistic approach that includes the famous "Twelve Steps" of Alcoholics Anonymous as one of its cornerstones.

HD: You combined what you learned from Dr. Hora with your experience at Guest House?
Tyrrell: That's right. I integrated all my experience with Hora into the Guest House experience. In fact, while at Guest House, I gave some informal talks on methods of aiding psychological and spiritual growth, methods learned in my therapy with Dr. Hora and worked out further on my own. Before going to Guest House I had taught a course at Gonzaga entitled "Healing Through Enlightenment." At Guest House, where I was introduced to the

Twelve Steps, I was able to blend something new, a synthesis of the methods of healing and growth I had learned and developed earlier, with the powerful spirituality present in the Twelve Steps. I also discovered a deep correlation between the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius and the Twelve Steps. These discoveries came to form the nucleus of Christotherapy, especially as I have developed it in my book *Christotherapy II*.

HD: Were there other important influences on the development of your thought?
Tyrrell: At the time I was seeing Dr. Hora, I read Viktor Frankl's book *Logotherapy*, and it struck me that Christ really is the *logos* (word) par excellence. Christ is *the* "logotherapist," so I came up with the term "Christotherapy," which means "healing through Christ," Christ who is the very liberating Truth of God made flesh.

Viktor Frankl, a Jewish psychiatrist who had survived the Nazi concentration camps, taught me through his writings that if a person can find meaning in life, he or she can live in practically any situation, no matter how terrible it might be. It further struck me that if neurotically or addictively suffering Christians really seek to make the values and truths Christ loved, taught, and lived their own, then the potential for healing and growth is remarkably enhanced.

HD: Are there specific schools of psychology on which Christotherapy builds?
Tyrrell: There are three major influences: first, those who stress unconditional love, acceptance, and affirmation (for instance, Carl Rogers and Conrad Baars); second, those who emphasize the need to unmask subconscious or unconscious destructive attitudes and assumptions, and the self-defeating behaviors that flow from them (such as Aaron Beck and Albert Ellis, without the latter's atheism, of course); and third, the Jewish and Christian existentialist emphasis on the need to discover and cherish life-giving meanings and values, and the need to create one's true self through the exercise of human freedom and the acceptance of the grace of God.

I believe that a great deal of neurotic suffering has its roots in a sense of being unlovable and worthless, in a lack of any sense of meaning or value in one's life, and in the failure to freely cooperate with God in the creation of one's true self. The three major influences I have just described provide powerful insights and tools for bringing about profound healing and growth with God's help.

HD: What are the basic methods on which Christotherapy is based?
Tyrrell: First, in the case of a person who has not been loved for himself or herself, a principal method of Christotherapy is "existential loving." This simply means saying to the person in verbal and nonverbal ways, "I'm glad that *you exist.* I'm happy that *you are.*" This involves discerning the good qualities that the person has, delighting in them, and pointing them out to the person in a way that reflects a kind of "soul-friend" relationship. The person using the principles of Christotherapy really comes to like, affirm, and love the other. Many people have not been accepted and loved for themselves; they feel worthless and unlovable. Existential loving—which simply means asserting "I'm glad that you exist"—is what such people need.

When a person has not been loved for himself or herself, he/she tends to unconsciously develop false attitudes and self-defeating strategies to gain love and acceptance. For example, a person who is desperate for love becomes desperately possessive of anyone showing some sign of friendship and acceptance. The possessively inclined individual often becomes resentful if anyone else shows attention toward this new friend, but this tends to alienate the friend from whom that person had hoped to gain love. As a result of such alienation, the person feels rejected. In addition to existential loving, this person needs "diagnostic discerning," the unmasking of destructive attitudes and strategies unconsciously developed by the person trying to gain a sense of being lovable.

It is not enough to unmask self-destructive attitudes or behaviors and then begin to let go of them, for example, to recognize and to let go of possessive forms of fantasizing and acting. It is essential to being to engage in "appreciative discerning," by replacing the destructive attitudes and behaviors with life-giving attitudes, values, and activities. The possessive person I have been describing learns to allow people to be who they are without clinging desperately to them, prayerfully seeking to appreciate and to be glad about the good qualities people have and simply being friendly without demanding a return. These two activities of diagnostic discerning and appreciative discerning are key moments that blossom in the fasting and feasting of the mind, heart, imagination, and spirit.

HD: What is *fasting* of the mind, heart, imagination, and spirit?
Tyrrell: The individual who engages in mind and heart fasting seeks with the help of God to fast from, or to release, those fantasies, beliefs, assumptions, and behaviors that he or she understands to be self-destructive, self-defeating, and misery creating. Every recovering addict and neurotic, for example, comes to see and verify in a gut fashion that there can be no room in his or her life for self-pity and resentment. These activities are just as deadly and harmful to the psyche and spirit as holding a burning object in one's hand. Self-pity

is truly "sickening," and the minute it is spotted, the recovering neurotic or addict lets go of it, fasts from it, *freely*, not in some repressive fashion or through a blind exercise of sheer will power, but as a result of enlightened diagnosis.

HD: What is *feasting* of the mind, heart, imagination, and spirit?
Tyrrell: As Jesus said, it's not enough just to drive out the devils; the devils need to be replaced with angels of light. The person who is fasting from some destructive form of mental activity or behavior needs to fill in the resulting gap or vacuum by discovering some authentic, life-enriching value to feast on. When a person is fasting from self-pity, he or she needs to appreciatively delight in, feast on, some value such as the experience of new-found physical health or, in the case of the addict, the happy freedom of sobriety.

Of course, everyone is called to such spirit feasting daily. I recommend to people that before going to a concert or meeting a friend, they prayerfully ask God to let the beauty of the music or the goodness of the friend shine forth during the concert or in the encounter. The beauty of the symphony or the goodness of the friend often does reveal itself in a new way, and this revelation (considered a revelation because it is a *gift*) is recognized and delighted in.

HD: Are there other Christotherapists besides yourself?
Tyrrell: Dr. David Fleiger is a Canadian psychologist and counselor who uses these methods and calls himself a Christotherapist. We sometimes give institutes and workshops together, but many people are using these methods of Christotherapy and are integrating them in different ways into their counseling, spiritual direction, and personal lives.

A principal aim of *Christotherapy II* is to invite counselors and spiritual directors to test the methods of Christotherapy. The book is also intended for "average" persons (who feel no need for therapy). I usually recommend that these people read the second book first.

HD: How can a person who may not feel a need for formal therapy benefit from the ideas on which Christotherapy is based?
Tyrrell: The processes of the fasting and feasting of the mind and of the heart can be practiced by anyone, regardless of his or her level of growth. Again and again I receive testimonies from people who tell me that the principles of Christotherapy have changed their lives, that they were not able to deal with problems before but that they can now because it becomes possible to let go of so much of the resentment and anger that contribute to the problem.

HD: How would you relate Christotherapy to the gospel?
Tyrrell: Healing and growth involve a Spirit-inspired self-transcendence, the opposite of which is self-referential thinking, desiring, and acting. The dynamics of fasting and feasting of mind and heart move the person away from a narcissistic, self-centered existence to a more self-transcending existence. This opens the person to values, to other people, and to God and moves him or her to seek to become a beneficial presence in the world. At the heart of Christotherapy is paradox, for the more a person lets go of self-referential concerns and opens up to what is other than self, the more that person experiences beatitude or happiness.

HD: Can Christotherapy be used in marriage and family therapy?
Tyrrell: Christotherapy applies to both the personal and the interpersonal. Christotherapy in marriage counseling would concern itself with helping the spouses see the many values in each other that selfishness can blind them to. Partners may need to let the good qualities of the other person emerge, and to delight in these good qualities. If spouses engage in the fasting and feasting of the mind, heart, imagination, and spirit, in reference to one another, healing and growth take place in the marriage. Engaging in existential loving, by consciously making a point of being glad that the other exists and telling this to him or her in verbal and nonverbal ways, can have a noticeable positive impact on a marriage.

HD: Could a Christotherapist help a person who is struggling with depression?
Tyrrell: Depression is difficult because of possible biophysical origins that cannot be handled by psychotherapy but can be treated with medication. At the heart of a psychological or emotional depression with no roots in a chemical imbalance is a sense of loss. The Christotherapist must first be loving toward the depressed person and help him or her engage in simple activities, like gardening, that enable the person to expend less energy in focusing on his or her loss, whatever it may have been. The Christotherapist might try to find out the nature and origin of the loss. Attachment can be to persons, places, things, even future possibilities that, when realized, do not meet a person's expectations. The depressed person tends to develop tunnel vision, making whatever was lost into an idol or an absolute, and says, "I cannot live without this." Ultimately, only God is needed to live. Dr. Hora says that attachment brings about depression, and the discovery of a new attachment brings about healing of an old depression. If a friend or loved one has been lost, other persons in the world offer the possibility of new love and friendship. Such a loss is also an opportunity for greater at-

tachment to God and for a deeper appreciation of people and human values.

HD: Does prayer have a place in Christotherapy?
Tyrrell: Prayer is at the core of Christotherapy. In prayers of petition the individual prays for the diagnostic or appreciative discernment needed to uncover and let go of what is destructive and to discover what is life-giving. In the prayer of repentance a person acknowledges sorrow for clinging to destructive attitudes and behaviors and in prayers of thanksgiving acknowledges God's constant revelation of new values.

I also encourage people to memorize poems, like those by John Donne, and I call this "existential memory enrichment." Unlike rote memorization of prayers, the idea is to memorize a poem or prayer that relates to a specific problem, struggle, value, or virtue. If the problem is fear, a person might memorize the Twenty-third or Ninety-first Psalm. Then, in a fearful situation when spontaneous prayer is not possible, a memorized poem or psalm is available. This sometimes helps to overcome fear when nothing else can.

HD: What do you hope people will gain through Christotherapy?
Tyrrell: Christotherapy is for both the deeply wounded—psychologically, spiritually, addictively—and the healthy who seek to reach higher levels of psychological and spiritual growth and enlightenment. It is my hope and prayer that all who use the methods of Christotherapy will be consoled and strengthened by Christ's Spirit, as I have been, and will come to a deeper understanding of how eager and able Christ is to bestow on everyone the gifts of healing and abundant life.

The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous

These are the Steps through which an estimated 1,000,000 men and women have achieved sobriety in the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous:

1–We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2–Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3–Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, *as we understood Him.*
4–Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5–Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6–Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7–Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8–Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9–Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10–Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11–Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him,* praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12–Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

The Twelve Steps reprinted with permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.

COMING TO REASON

JAMES TORRENS, S.J.

Last night, running out of drink,
we took early retirement (vowing
never again), to awaken clear as birds
for once, throw a robe on, light up,
and step outside, coinciding with dawn.

"My God, it's gorgeous!" We knew then
you cannot tell a person things.
The familiar hangs ripening
and falls. You have to be there
catching like Newton with a name.

We locked arms reentering. Our sharp
looks over coffee agreed, Who needs
the hair of the dog! "Funny," she said,
"It hits me, children don't have to
thank." And I, "Late, but our light goes on."

Remember when we used to designate age seven as the age of reason? We still use that age as a rough working norm for First Communion, with our hunch that about this time children become able to grasp some quite serious things. (We also know how restless and full of beans they can still be.) We know, on the other hand, that quite mysteriously, the reasoning power begins to operate with or even before birth; it is tremendous and not to be underestimated. Hence the Eastern Church, the Byzantine Catholic rite, has been giving even tiny children a taste of the Holy Species, along with their parents, because receiving the Eucharist is essentially an exercise of faith, a gift coming to us through the church.

We all recognize—Eastern and Western, youngish and aging—that to become reasonable takes a lifetime, and then some. This recognition, which is already a step far along in the process of maturing, makes us humble recipients of the gifts of the Spirit when they come. Here again, we can hardly underestimate the powers given us upon the occasion of our second birth, the outpouring of the Lord's Spirit upon us in baptism, as a result of which we are rooted in true goodness, given an unerring direction toward the fullness of Christ, and made subject daily to forces of transformation from within.

And yet, far from solving everything, our baptism, our identification with Christ, often makes more glaring the gap between what we are meant or supposed to be and what we actually are. St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians as to a "holy people of Jesus Christ, who are called to take their place among all the saints everywhere" (I Cor 1:2). He was not flattering them or being ironic. It was what he found most true. Yet everyone knows he intended to plead with them not to be childish, competing with other churches for prestige and highest honor; not to abandon themselves to sensual lives, as did their fellow citizens of the port city; not to be stingy in supporting the destitute Jewish Christians back in the Holy Land. He was trying to help them be not milk-fed Christians but mature.

What a big order! How long that takes for almost everyone! These days, late in the twentieth century, give us the frequent spectacle of people coming to their senses, beginning to straighten out, far down the road of their lives. Second careers often mean that people find themselves first after painfully switching direction; so do some second marriages, or the return to secular life from religious orders. Considering the fallout, the hurt to others and occasional wreckage that the second chance often entails, it does not, as a solution, satisfy as fully as the rediscovery of a first love. But it is a solution, often the only one; sometimes it is the originally right one asserting itself.

A person should be happy and feel privileged, no matter at what advanced date, to have gained some stability, learned to give and take, "mellowed out." The Catholic Church, in its approach to dispensations and annulments, has come, if slowly, to rec-

ognize this, even while struggling to keep the sights clear and not to play fast and loose with serious commitments.

The people who come to reason late, very late, are often terribly accomplished in business or professions—masters of computer systems, skilled repairmen, tenders of others, clever arrangers of anything under the sun. They prove deficient in just one thing: self-possession, which paradoxically involves relinquishing the self. The realization of what we are truly like and who, as individuals before God, we truly are, along with realization of the potential or gift still locked up in us, happens at a much different rhythm from learning to use the Macintosh computer or an accounting system. It is a matter both of swallowing the hard truths and daring to believe the redemptive ones: the two sides of our salvation.

The redeeming truths are those gifts of birth without which we would not be at all, or be skilled particularly, and those baptismal gifts without which we would be lost. Often we do not dare even admit them to ourselves, because we might have to take some big steps, change our whole orientation. For example, suppose we are under oppressive management, which we put up with, we shut up about, because we like what we ourselves are doing and do not want to be stomped. But our very dignity calls sometimes for a courageous move. The Karen Silkwood story, the movie *Silkwood*, is about that—an imperfect woman upon whom it dawned one day that to live well she had to take a dangerous initiative. What helped her do that was the realization that life itself, her life, was already brimful of danger.

The poet Rilke has a marvelous sonnet about the Archaic Torso of Apollo, the enormous twisting trunk that thousands have viewed along with the smooth Apollo Belvedere in the Vatican Art Exhibit. The body itself, Rilke says to his reader, is full of gleams, expressions, and communications to you if you dare look at it, which are summed up in the sonnet's final words: "You must change your lives." Just such an effect should the body of our faith have upon us.

As to the hard truths, these emerge after some sharp questions. What is it in us that causes pain to others, our conscious or only half-realized patterns that needlessly and often cause difficulties or distress? Or, taking another tack, what way of acting and thinking is self-destructive for us? Are we carrying some resentment night and day? Are we too keen always to have someone else think well of us? Are we anxious for security beyond all readiness to risk? These are lapses of faith or charity possible to the baptized wherein the Holy Spirit is hindered from filling us.

How indeed are we to grow? It may be presumptuous to say, but one can at least point to an image exploited by the poet Dante in his long epic of pil-

grimage to God, *The Divine Comedy*. It was the image of a climb up Mount Purgatory. The climbers wind around and around; there is some sense of give and stretch and leisurely pace in the effort, but they follow basically a spiral upward. They meet numerous others who, even amidst pain, are happy to be reshaping themselves, redirecting their love.

T. S. Eliot, in "Ash Wednesday" (1928), retouches this notion of Dante's to picture our growth as movement up a winding stair, with pauses at various turnings, either to look down with a shudder upon times of trouble and temptation glimpsed below (and summed up in Shelley's exclamation: "O world, O life, O time, on whose vast steps I climb, at each step trembling at that whereon I stood before") or to look out a narrow window at romantic images of one's past, with hankering, but with a sense that they are beyond recovery. Eliot sees old age and difficulty above, but also the entry into God. Dante finds at the mountaintop the Earthly Paradise, a return to innocence, the discovery of love in its true condition, God coming to us in those we love.

Blessed are those who do come to reason, even if late. More blessed, those gifted to do so from the start. The church works with couples who have stated an intention to marry, expressly to assess, and help them develop, understanding and true commitment. Those most in need of help, perhaps, are at the other end of the process, those for whom things seem to come unstuck just when they should be mellowing. Issues beset them—desires, fears, resentments—with which they have never really dealt. They may get the terrible sensation of going down the mountain rather than up.

This last, an experience of the time of shaking, can also be a time of illumination. Healing attitudes or memories must be attended to, receptiveness to God's surprises and providential signs induced. Strategies may be undertaken to help us respond, but mostly a new kind of honesty with oneself, and a humble look to the Other. Opportunity does not always dress up when it comes. "In a dark time," wrote the poet Theodore Roethke, who had seen many of them, "the eye begins to see."

The most sophisticated charts of our maturing process, for example, the steps to moral insight as charted by Kohlberg and retouched by Carol Gilligan, are at best inspired generalities. They fit individual cases, but with some pushing and shoving. God's times and seasons—ours, looked at from the truly large view—are unpredictable. The goal remains the same, arriving at "the mature human state, the growth mark of the fullness of Christ" (Eph 4:13). But how slow our arriving, what a long time we take, with untwisting and redirecting and new starts, coming to reason. So, welcome to any strong indications that we are doing so!

GUIDELINES FOR DISCERNMENT

ERNEST E. LARKIN, O. Carm., S.T.D.

Editor's note: The following directives were presented by Father Larkin at the General Chapter of the Order of Carmelites in 1983, on a day of recollection set aside to prepare for the general elections.

Our task on this day of discernment is threefold: to get in touch with ourselves, with God, and with one another. In this way, and only in this way, will we be able to do justice to the immense responsibility of electing a new governing body for the Order.

During the past two weeks we have enjoyed the privilege of experiencing the Order in microcosm. We have renewed old friendships in our international brotherhood and perhaps created new ones. Now the most obvious responsibility is upon us, the elections. Perhaps voting patterns have begun to surface in our minds. Are these choices the right ones? Are they "in the Lord"? What assurance do we have that we are in the truth and moving under the Spirit of God?

EVALUATIVE SELF-KNOWLEDGE

It is not enough to say, "This is how I feel; this is my best judgment." We need to examine the connection between our feelings and our judgments. We see candidates and offices through the kaleidoscope of our own mindsets and feelings. How important it is, then, that we be in touch with how we think and feel, that we strive to understand our motivation. This knowledge is not theoretical but personal, not notional but real, to use Cardinal Newman's terms, not abstract but evaluative. It is not textbook knowledge or the skill of using the right language. It is awareness of what is going on inside us in decision making.

I may know, for example, that I am choleric by temperament, because I test out this way. But here and now, in the act of making a choice, I may be unaware of my imperious need to dominate and unconscious of the aggressive movements that are churning inside me and considerably affecting my judgment. In this case I am not in touch with myself.

This kind of personal knowledge is not easily achieved. It results from dealing with our own experience with awareness and insight. It takes honesty and courage, too, because we experience ourselves, not in a vacuum, but as disciples of Jesus. We not only recognize, we evaluate our thinking and affectivity. We integrate our life, experience by experience, into the larger story of the Christian community and the Carmelite brotherhood. We are in touch with our own story and the normative story in an experiential way. To that extent we are equipped to engage in the process of discernment. This does not mean that we "have it all together" or are perfect. It does mean that we are engaged in the struggle to be in touch with ourselves.

Some might think it sufficient to reflect rationally on the question of the most suitable candidates. Analyze the situation, they would say, and make your choice. No doubt this is what we must do, but with discernment, and part of the process is to be aware of the psychic and social elements that are conditioning our thinking. In discernment we *feel* rather than reason our way to conclusions, and thus the subjective aspects assume special importance. We need to cultivate awareness of the a-rational, the affective, and the unconscious elements in decision making.

IMAGES GIVE GUIDANCE

How do we do this? Some beautiful pages from American Protestant theology on the role of sym-

bolic and affective criteria, recently discussed by William Spohn, S.J., in "The Reasoning Heart" (*Theological Studies* 44, 1983), may help us here. Our symbol-making nature and our affectivity are privileged doors to self-knowledge. We express ourselves more dynamically in images than in abstractions; affections reveal our hearts. Images that come out of our history and the holy affective dispositions that progressively reflect our assimilation to Christ offer a voice to tell us where we are coming from and where we are going.

The image-become-symbol is the image internalized; it comes from within ourselves as well as from without. It contains and evokes our experience. Images of this sort speak to our whole person. They resonate with our affectivity, both triggering connatural affections and expressing other affections already developed. To be in touch with the symbols of one's life and the affections that accompany them, without, of course, having to act out or even approve every affection, is to be in touch with the real person. It is not a game; it is not cheap grace, a simplistic exercise of identifying some arbitrary image and detecting surface movements of the heart. This experiential knowledge comes from grappling with life, from struggling to enter into ourselves to take possession of ourselves and thus to grow in human consciousness. In this day of recollection we can only assess our achievement and perhaps in our reflection bring our self-perception into sharper focus.

I would like to invite you to focus on your life, to express yourself in an image. This means to image yourself in some concrete representation. Images that fit are laden with feelings. I invite you to look at those feelings. Together, image and affect will supply clues about who you are and what is going on within you.

AIDS TO IMAGING

Let me give some illustrations of typical images and affections. These are only starters. Each one of us must be our own image-maker. Get in touch with your recent experience, then, and let your imagination run freely.

1. *Predominant stance:* Am I judge, policeman, rescuer, victim, politician, sage, clown, eternal boy, nice guy, critic, agitator? Am I a pleaser, a dominator, a loner? If I am consciously or unconsciously acting out of one of these, my interpretation of reality follows accordingly. For example, if I am a pleaser, I will not want to face opposition, much less confront others, because I need to ingratiate myself; if I am a dominator, I will be closed to other opinions, lest I lose control; if I am a loner, I am the elder brother of the prodigal son, and I will miss the main lesson of the gospel, which is love and forgiveness.

2. *Elections:* Am I a power broker, a kingmaker, more interested in winning than in promoting the right person? Or am I a thoughtless and irresponsible pawn on the chessboard, one who does not care enough or trust enough to study out the issues independently and take a position?

3. *Role identity:* Am I more secular than sacred or vice versa? Is my life stance one that looks backward or faces forward? Am I more concerned about conserving the past or developing the future? Where are my values? In what do I trust? Am I an insecure protector of the status quo or a compulsive innovator?

Images carry feelings, and in reverse, feelings lend themselves to translation in image or metaphor. (The angry man, for example, is a raging bull.) The feelings run the gamut of human affectivity, but it is particularly the habitual, consented to (therefore willed as well as felt), morally colored "affections" that are most significant. These are "religious affections," which Jonathan Edwards identified as "the springs that set man agoing, in all the affairs of life." The good affections in this latter sense are virtues, and the disordered affections are vices that are off center and out of kilter with the truth. Bad affections betray, mislead, and leave the agent more skewed than ever. They are in the service of false gods like ambition, pride, lust, laziness, and all the capital sins.

Good affections as listed by Paul in Galatians, "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control," lead to *shalom* and are the fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22–23). Disordered affections, more easily recognized in the language of contemporary psychology, include neurotic tendencies, addictions, compulsions, excessive guilt, mindless hostility, resentment, and projections.

Which of these two series are present in our hearts? Likely, both of them in some form or degree. We need to recognize all of them. We need to see what thoughts are coming out of the negative feelings and what patterns are associated with the virtues and fruits of the Spirit. We observe them all in order to interpret the undulating currents of good and bad inspirations and to understand where our convictions are coming from and why we think the way we do.

EXPERIENCING SELF IN GOD

Our second task is to be in touch with God. This is not a wholly new task separate from self-knowledge. It is to take our newly discovered self before God. Being in touch with ourselves and being in touch with God are one movement. I need to experience myself in God.

If I know and own myself, it is because I have moved beyond the fragments. I have achieved a

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certain wholeness. I am my own person and live in Christ Jesus. I am a person who lives with the pieces but is not controlled by them, either individually or as a sum total. When the parts control (e.g., my talents, good looks, sins), they become idols. This is true of unconscious parts, like unintegrated sexuality or repressed anger. It is true of conscious attachments, like the need for gratification or control, biases, hangups. Jesus said, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone" (Mk 10:18). One is absolute Good, all else is relative. I need to inscribe and incarnate this reality in my soul by accepting God as God and integrating the experiences of my life into the totality that is myself in God. That is freedom; that is integration. It is also moving closer to God.

DETACHMENT BRINGS UNION

St. John of the Cross called it detachment and considered it the royal road to divine union. It was, in fact, almost synonymous with contemplation, the *kenosis* (emptiness) that is the negative side of *pleroma* (fullness). To be in touch with myself is not just to know my self-images and feelings; that would be to know *about* me. To be in touch is to have a certain integration, to be healed of fragmentation and brokenness, mostly by letting go of the myriad forms of self-centeredness. This happens, according to John of the Cross, when "all the soul's infirmities are brought to light; they are set before its eyes to be felt and healed" (*Living Flame* 1, 21). Unrecognized, unintegrated infirmities are enduring attachments that cloud the mind and mislead the will. The way they are neutralized is by knowing, owning, and integrating them. That is purification and healing.

Every step toward wholeness is a step toward God and the fulfillment of our Carmelite vocation of contemplation; it is one very secure way of "seeking and living in the presence of the living and true God" (*Constitutions of the Order of Carmel*, 1971, n. 13). Getting in touch with God is not a head trip; it is not theologizing or even reading Scripture. It is not a matter of taking thought any more than self-knowledge is a matter of undergoing psychological tests. To be in touch with God is "to

know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his suffering" (Phil 3:10). It is dying and rising with the Lord Jesus, our paschal mystery.

This day of recollection gives us time and opportunity to process some of our brokenness. We may taste the bitterness of our hostility, for example, when we recognize that we are cultivating an "elephant memory" that will not forgive and forget some early stupidity in an otherwise worthy candidate; or we can experience our resentment in the prejudice that is really projection against certain nationalities, races, or age groups. We can observe our blind spots, our dark side, our self-deceptions, our misplaced anger, our penchant for skirting responsibility. This will help us be more free in decision making, because we will be our own person, freed from constraints and pressures from below.

COMMUNION OF FRIENDS

Our third task is to get in touch with each other. This experience of brotherhood follows easily from the experience of wholeness. Wholeness means union with God, and fraternity is the sacrament of that union.

When we accept our sinfulness in the presence of the in-breaking love of God, pride and sensuality melt away. We are in touch with our weakness, on the one hand, and the incredible love of God, on the other; the result of this double confluence is gentleness, compassion, forgiveness. Defensiveness gives way to truth; weak brothers move out toward each other in acceptance, and community happens. Only weak persons, not people in competition, form community. Although it is painful to face up to our neediness and sinfulness, it is liberating and joyful. *Passio* (suffering) becomes *compassio* (suffering with), and the result is true fraternity.

Fraternity thrives on openness, self-disclosure, transparency, mutual trust. But exchange at this depth is not easily come by. It demands the struggle to be honest and presupposes the gift of being loved by the other. The reason is that we have moved to the level of friendship. A friend is one who knows you and loves you anyway. Real community is the communion of friends. It is the ideal atmosphere for making decisions together. In this general chapter we must struggle to achieve this level of relationship and communication.

QUESTIONS TO FACE

Forming community is the remote preparation for the elections; establishing some practical procedures for reflecting about the candidates might be a proximate help for the elective process. I would like to offer two suggestions on procedure.

First, I suggest that we review the current state of the Order to determine what kind of leadership

we need for the eighties. We have before us in this chapter a cross section of our membership. We have also read the reports of the prechapter inquiries about present conditions and where we would like to be. We might look about us, perhaps reread the reports, and ask what our needs are, what gifts are present among us. What gifts are needed at this juncture of history for actualizing the mission of the Order? What kind of leadership will best serve us, individually and corporately? Do we need a prophet to blaze new trails? A healer to put us back together? An administrator to organize us? Do we need a charismatic figure or a legislator, an animator or a manager? Perhaps after our experience together there is already a feel for an answer to these questions.

The second suggestion is to look at individuals in our group or at other members of the Order who may not be here and identify outstanding gifts in them that might be graces for the Order at this moment of history. God is faithful and he cares for us existentially and particularly. He will give us the leadership we need according to the demands of the times. Perhaps we will discover our greatest needs by observing their revelation as gifts from God already among us. We can go back and forth in our inquiry, from needs to gifts and back again. The recognized needs may point to certain gifted persons, and outstanding gifts in the persons bring home to us places where we most need help.

The premise of this day of recollection is the belief that if we pray, God will come. He will come in a clearer vision of what the needs are and in a more selfless commitment on the part of each of us to truth and love. God will come in the right candidates for the offices of general and councilors, for a team that will work effectively together. The right candidates are not necessarily the smartest, the most educated, or even the strongest ones. They are the right ones for the offices now. May the Lord prosper our efforts today and in the next few days place us under his Spirit.

A New Look at Worrying

In a recent issue of the British journal *Behavior Research and Therapy* (vol. 21, no. 1, 1983), psychologist T. D. Borkovec and his colleagues at the University of Pennsylvania reported that little scientific investigation of the nature, characteristics, process, and treatment of worry has been conducted. These current investigators define worry as "a chain of thoughts and images, negatively affect-laden and relatively uncontrollable." They view the worry process as "an attempt to engage in mental problem solving on an issue whose outcome is uncertain but contains the possibility of one or more negative outcomes."

Borkovec finds that worry can prepare an individual to cope more effectively and less emotionally with a feared event. An advantage can be derived from its combination of repeated mental exposure to what is feared and covert search for ways of coping with the threat. He found in his study that worry content was primarily concerned with future events (46.9%), followed by present situations (29.5%) and past events (20.9%).

Worry rarely occurs for lengthy periods of time. It goes on for a few seconds or minutes, then the worrier reattends to environmental tasks. "The feeling of pervasive worry during the day," Borkovec believes, is just "a reflection of the frequency of these brief worry periods rather than the true continuous duration of any one episode."

Compulsive worrying is very closely associated with insomnia, anxiety, and mild depression. The insomnia often results from a person's inability to turn off intrusive, emotionally upsetting thoughts and images at bedtime. There is evidence that relaxation techniques used at the end of the day, as well as at other times, can reduce or eradicate these anxiety-maintaining thoughts. Frequent worriers are advised to learn one or more of these techniques and apply them faithfully under a psychologists's or psychiatrist's direction.

The Vocations of Priest and Therapist

JENNIFER L. COLE, Ph.D.

We often hear it said that in the contemporary, secular world, the psychotherapist has assumed the role and functions of the priest, as confessor and interpreter of subjective reality. Psychoanalysis has even been accused of being a substitute religion for some, an accusation that is valid in those instances in which the analyst and analysis become the final court of appeal, where questions of value and meaning are concerned. Today Freud's attempts to reduce the Eucharist, rites, and hope of eternal life to cannibalistic fantasy, obsessional mechanisms, and wishful thinking are common knowledge. But since the two vocations are so often counterposed, it seems refreshing to consider some of their commonalities.

There is an asceticism intrinsic to both vocations that is fashioned out of the dual demands, central to each, of identification and detachment. The priest and therapist struggle, internally and through their work with others, for salvation and integration, respectively. Their work demands that they continually clarify, and even model for others, the successful integration of primitive and compelling feelings, fantasies, and passions that they continue to experience themselves. A major part of the growth that both achieve will be due to their efforts on behalf of others. Additionally, failure to tend the inner garden, whether from arrogance or enfeeblement, will quickly limit their usefulness as realistic, compassionate guides for others.

STRENGTH AND FLEXIBILITY REQUIRED

A facility for identification is essential; one cannot reach others unless one is willing to share their experience. St. Paul understood this when he said, "Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep." Or as a colleague, Father Martin Smith, wrote to me:

The prayer life of the priest especially calls him to face the weak and rejected and alarming persons within himself so that he will be open to others when they come to him embodying those same traits, in the hope of saying a saving word in terms that can be heard and being a saving presence through the medium of rapport and sympathy.

The demand for this sort of identification always entails its own special risk, namely, that of succumbing to the regressive pull of the less civilized forces in question or of protecting oneself by withdrawal, criticism, or some other rupture in empathy. For both the priest and therapist these identifications must be transient and reversible, serving empathy while not involving the whole self. Both emotional strength and flexibility are needed.

This suggests another curious problem bearing on these vocations, that of the inevitable limitation of the human instrument. Smith's observations on this dilemma echo my own experience:

Many of us are not particularly well suited to the ministry, but in rising to its demands the mystery of grace and the reality of the gospel come true in and for us. I am always on the lookout for signs of this phenomenon which shows itself in all sorts of little things. Here I am feeling as neurotic as can be, yet strangely able to help someone else make a decision wisely and well; feeling lonely and just then able to speak from the heart of communion and love; guilty and apathetic and just then able to help someone towards repentence and commitment.

Therapists, too, must sometimes reach beyond their own capacities in order to assist a patient who is moving toward an experience that may be unfamiliar to them but that they can, nevertheless, understand.

There are also parallels between the two vocations regarding the role of free will in the change

process itself, whether this is spiritual or psychological. In spiritual development, grace is freely responded to, and grace and free will complement one another. In psychotherapy, the personal qualities and therapeutic skill of the doctor meet their complement in the will (at whatever level it can be experienced) of the patient to recover. One of the marks of gifted therapists is their ability to accommodate themselves to the shifting needs and capacities of their patients. In a sense, they are imitating the action of grace. They may have to cultivate a tenuous trust for a long time before it provides a very substantial basis for a working relationship. Most therapists have experienced the anguish of sitting with patients who are not able to muster the will to change, who have lost hope and trust, or who are too sick to use what they have to offer. This scene must be familiar to those who have charge over the moral and spiritual struggles of others, in which destructiveness and integration vie for dominance.

SUPPORT NEEDED TEMPORARILY

Both the priest and therapist are in the position of encouraging another to surrender known, if unsatisfactory, modes of adaptation and sources of pleasure and self-esteem for a supposedly greater, yet unknown, good. This surrender requires that the individual have a tentative faith that the unknown good both exists and is possible. In psychotherapy, the patient customarily spends a great deal of time and money, to say nothing of anxiety, shame, or other painful feelings, before beginning to sense improvement; this is even more true of growth in holiness. During this difficult period, priests or therapists may have to provide interim support by having faith vested in themselves. This role should be a temporary one, however; both priest and therapist ought to turn aside attempts to make them the permanent object of the trust or affection of those to whom they minister. Patients must eventually rely on themselves; the faithful on their God. Yet it is so typically human to cling to the concrete person who is the necessary vehicle of learning, rather than face the private and initially unfamiliar goal that one is supposed to be seeking.

Thus it is not uncommon for both priest and therapist to be idealized by those to whom they minister and, sadly, even by themselves. This idealization reflects, among other things, a powerful human need to preserve the illusion that there is someone who is not prey to the weaknesses and doubts that are the lot of mankind. This illusion often serves to assuage the anxiety that results from the realization that one is essentially alone in the face of life's major crises. Psychotherapy helps people to distinguish between what they can reasonably expect to do on their own behalf but are not yet doing and what is unreasonable to ex-

pect of themselves, in other words, to identify their passivity and omnipotence. Religious faith requires that persons recognize their responsibility to cooperate in redemption while remembering their essential dependence on God.

I have discussed the dual demands of identification and differentiation and their role in supporting the articulation of spiritual and psychological realities. My concluding thoughts concern the quality of restraint or detachment that is necessary to the proper functioning of the priest and therapist. Father Henri Nouwen, in *The Wounded Healer*, considers detachment a pivotal aspect of the priestly role, which he describes as that of a "contemplative critic":

> As a contemplative critic he keeps a certain distance to prevent his becoming absorbed in what is most urgent and most immediate. . . . The contemplative critic can be a leader for a convulsive generation because he can break through the vicious cycle of immediate needs asking for immediate satisfaction. He can direct the eyes of those who want to look beyond their impulses and steer erratic energy into creative channels. He does not allow anybody to worship idols, and he constantly asks his fellow men to ask real, often painful and upsetting questions, to look behind the surface of smooth behavior and take away all the obstacles that prevent him from getting to the heart of the matter.

The position described here could be taken from the pages of a book on analytic technique; one easily recognizes the essence of the analytic posture at its best, that is, the spirit of neutral, detached inquiry that proceeds in an atmosphere of abstinence. Abstinence in psychotherapy refers to the nonindulgence of the patient's or therapist's sensual or aggressive impulses. A certain freedom from subservience to the drives for action and gratification permits clearer perception and decision making. This freedom is similar to the goal of contemplatives, who seek by their ascetic discipline to free themselves for the infused graces. The cultivation of detachment in the context of a muted psychosocial environment allows a free space, both inner and outer, wherein can occur the awareness of delicate affective experiences that would be washed out by more intense sensory stimulation and activity.

Finally, we should recognize that the essential function of the ascetic stance of priest and therapist is not to be an end in itself, but is instead to provide a secure environment that allows the greatest possible freedom for imagination and feelings. It is not depriving, because the priest or therapist is not providing an alternative or substitute for daily life, but instead is offering a place for reflection and learning that ought naturally to return the individual to his or her primary relationships to God and fellow human beings.

REVIEW

Self-Help for Premenstrual Syndrome, by Michelle Harrison, M.D. P.O. Box 740, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Matrix Press, 1982. 49 pp. $4.95.

A person's physical and emotional state can either contribute to or interfere with the way they interact with others, perform their work, or perceive the quality of their relationship with God. Thus, any psychophysiologic force in a woman's life that is likely to result in difficulty in any of these areas should be of interest to the woman herself and her husband, family, community, friends, and colleagues. Precisely this sort of condition, and one likely to produce distressful symptoms in a woman's life and an undesirable impact on the lives of others around her, is the affliction physicians have labelled the "premenstrual syndrome" (PMS). The topic is a popular one today in women's magazines and on television talk shows as well as in medical and nursing journals. Unfortunately, there is still, despite all this attention, too much misinformation about PMS being circulated among women (and the men in their lives), and as a result, too much unnecessary distress continues to be experienced by millions of adults every day.

In their article "Premenstrual Syndromes: Overview from a Methodologic Perspective," (American Journal of Psychiatry, February 1984), research psychiatrists David Rubinow and Peter Ray-Byrne stated: "A menstrually related mood disorder can be defined as the cyclic occurrence of symptoms that are of sufficient severity to interfere with some aspect of life and which appear with a consistent and predictable relationship to menses." The authors point out that certain questions are inherent in their definition, including (1) What are the symptoms that are experienced? (2) To what degree are the symptoms experienced, i.e., what is their intensity? (3) When do they occur in relationship to menstruation? and (4) What is the symptomatic baseline on which symptoms fluctuate? Their discussion of the problem concludes, surprisingly, with the observation that despite half a century of study, there is still remarkably little known about menstrually related mood disorders, including their causes and appropriate treatment.

Fortunately, however, there is now available a concise summary of the current medical knowledge about PMS in Self-Help for Premenstrual Syndrome, by Michelle Harrison, M.D., a Cambridge, Massachusetts gynecologist who specializes in the treatment of women with premenstrual difficulties. She dispels most, if not all, of the myths about PMS, which affects almost 85% of adult women. The book describes the common symptoms, which vary from individual to individual, including those that are (a) affective, e.g., sadness, anxiety, anger, irritability; (b) cognitive, e.g., decreased concentration, indecision, paranoia, suicidal ideation; (c) painful, e.g., discomfort in head, joints, muscles; (d) neurovegetative, e.g., insomnia, fatigue, agitation, craving for certain foods; (f) dermatological, e.g., acne, dry or greasy hair; (g) behavioral, e.g., decreased motivation, poor impulse control, decreased efficiency, social isolation; (h) fluid/electrolyte, e.g., bloating, weight gain, edema; (i) related to the central nervous system, e.g., clumsiness, dizziness, tremors, seizures.

Dr. Harrison recommends that women keep a daily record of symptoms each month for several months, since the cyclical nature of symptoms is a major key to diagnosis. She includes several blank monthly charts with an explanation of how they can be used. The author's clearly described treatment plan includes strong recommendations regarding diet, proper nutrition, and adequate exercise, which in many cases render unnecessary the use of progesterone (a naturally occuring female hormone). She expresses her reservations about using this potent and potentially dangerous medicine as a panacea for PMS, and insists that if such treatment is to be initiated, it should be prescribed by a specially trained and experienced physician, since the Food and Drug Administration still refuses to approve the general prescribing of progesterone for PMS, because of possible side effects.

The book presents a very positive attitude toward women who suffer from PMS, encouraging them to "become less defensive about premenstrual experiences." She assures them that "positive, constructive, and creative energies may be enhanced premenstrually," and that "self-healing energy" is available "to be called upon by women and those who help them in the treatment and understanding of menstrual-cycle-related phenomena." I recommend this short book strongly to all women who want to familiarize themselves with solid medical knowledge and experience before beginning treatment for PMS. It can also be useful to others interested in the problem, who want to be of help to women troubled by the periodic symptoms mentioned above.

—**Linda Amadeo, R.N., M.S.**

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LAUGHTER IN THE CURRICULUM

George Eppley, Ph.D.

Some 20 years ago I taught a graduate-level course on the philosophy of education at Saint John College of Cleveland. I told the class I would expect two papers at the end of the semester. One paper was to be the student's personal philosophy of education; the other was to be the philosophy of education that the student would espouse if he or she were ever the principal of a school.

When the time came to read and return the papers with appropriate comments, I usually regretted giving this double assignment because there were always twenty or twenty-five students in the class. One evening, however, the task of correcting became pure joy. A middle-aged woman who taught in a Cleveland public school had written, "If I were principal, my school would be a place where laughter flows through the curriculum." That sentence leaped out at me. Had she written nothing else, I would have given her an A.

A couple of days later, I returned the papers to the class. It was impossible to comment on all of them, but I did single out the one about laughter in the curriculum. I read it to the class and said I wished I had written it. The class and I had a lively discussion about laughter and its place in the school. I dismissed them with some parting comments about the final exam, which they would be taking the following week.

The night of the final I arrived early and was pacing up and down the corridor next to the classroom. Suddenly, I was confronted by the woman who had written about laughter in the curriculum. She was wearing a large hat, carrying books in one arm and an oversized handbag in the other.

"How do you like my handbag?" she asked.

"Oh, it's nice," I said, not wanting to let her know that I am not big on big handbags.

"It's genuine Mexican leather. It cost fifty-five dollars!"

"Fifty-five dollars?"

"Yes, fifty-five dollars, and you're the cause of my buying it."

"Me? I don't recall my telling you or anyone to buy a fifty-five-dollar handbag."

"Of course, you didn't tell me to buy it. But you praised me in our last class, and I felt so good about it that I went to Halle's Department Store after class and bought the handbag. You know, that was the second time I had ever been praised in school. The other time was in the third grade!"

At the time I showed no emotion. But I was so moved by that incident that later that evening I wept, not only for her but for the countless students I had taught but had never publicly praised.

I have often thought about that teacher and what she said. Unfortunately, I did not keep in contact with her, so I am not sure whether she is still living

and still teaching and still striving to be in charge of a school where laughter could flow through the curriculum.

An eccentric? Perhaps. Or maybe just different. Was she already at six years of age just a little bit different from the average first grader—more mature, more independent, more self-directed? And were those the reasons why she was never singled out for praise? I suspect that they were. Her behavior was her way of saying, "Look at me. I'm a person too. I have good ideas and I have something to say." Indeed she had, but obviously no one bothered to listen.

I was a principal of a Catholic high school in the turbulent sixties. Although I have no interest in becoming a principal again, I do have an interest in Catholic secondary school education. I believe that a Catholic high school principal has a unique opportunity to facilitate the training of men and women for leadership roles in the 21st century. If a newly appointed principal were to ask me for advice, here are some suggestions I would give.

1. Take time out every day to read and meditate on the scriptures. A major task of the Catholic high school principal, in my judgment, is that of taking a leadership role in forming the community of high school students into a faith community that proclaims that Jesus is the Lord of all creation. That is a difficult thing to do at any time in the history of the American Catholic Church. But in a society where traditional values and life-styles are often held up to ridicule, and at a time when tremendous peer pressures are leading the young to experiment with sex, alcohol, and drugs, the task looks monumental and indeed impossible.

Certainly, the principal will want to consult all available resources to find solutions to the problems. To neglect, for example, the advice and strategies of marriage or drug-abuse counselors would be rash and irresponsible. What I am saying is that principals should also identify with persons and events of the Old and New Testament, to realize that God is indeed a God of history who does not abandon those who trust and believe in him.

Paul wrote to Timothy that "every scripture has its use for teaching the truth and refuting error, or for the reformation of manners and discipline in right living, so that the person who belongs to God may be efficient and equipped for good work of every kind" (2 Tm 3:16). If anyone should think that Paul's advice is rather simplistic for this sophisticated age, then I urge that person to read *Aubade: A Teacher's Notebook*, by Wallace Fowlie

First
Recommendation
For
Principals

"Take time out every day to read and meditate upon the Scriptures"
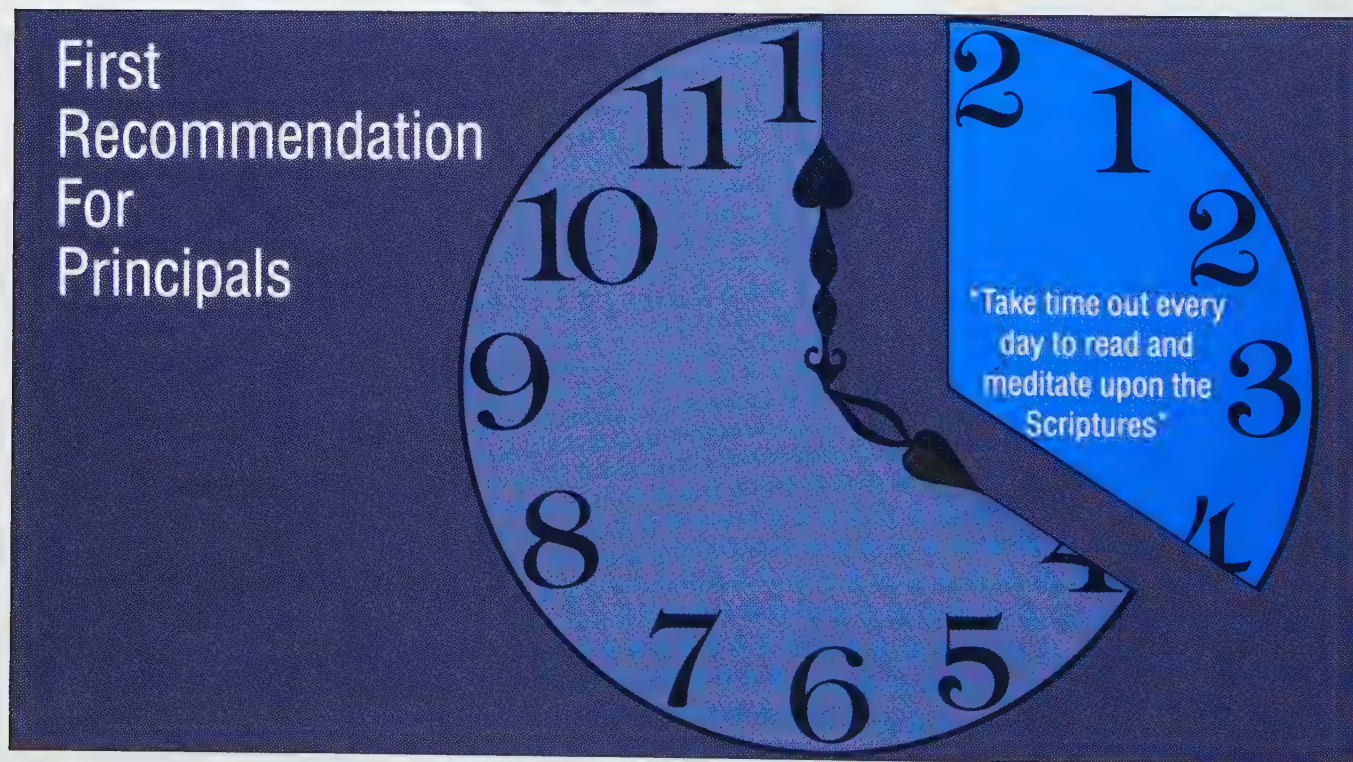
(Duke University Press, 1983). Fowlie is James B. Duke Professor Emeritus of French literature at Duke University, a teacher of Dante and one of the foremost teachers and scholars of French language and literature of our time. Raised as a Baptist, he became an Anglican in his youth and later a Roman Catholic. His closing chapter, "Catholicism," shows why worship is central to his life and why, to this man of distinguished literary scholarship, the Bible is the great educator.

2. Strive to create an environment of creativity, laughter, and individuality rather than one of discipline, regimentation, and control. I ran a tight ship, a no-nonsense school. Teacher morale was good, and despite the usual gripes of high school students, student morale was generally high, too. The parents who paid tuition were not short-changed, nor were students. Those who went to college—there were many—were well prepared. Those who did not generally found steady employment after graduation.

I forgot, however, about affective education. It wasn't even in my vocabulary. Feelings were important but were not the province of education. It was a cruel, tough world they would soon enter, and our job was to prepare them to take their places in it.

Later—after I had been away from the high school principal's job for a few years—I happened to read Joseph Featherstone's *Schools Where Children Learn.* A sentence in that book has stayed with me for more than a decade. Somewhere in it is the statement "The best preparation for life is to live fully as a child." Isn't that what the Second Vatican Council said in a different way? "The glory of Creation is man [and woman and child] fully alive." Regrettably, the students where I was principal were prevented from being fully alive.

3. Operate a school where parents, teachers, secretaries, and cafeteria and maintenance workers work together with administrators and faculty to help students become more fully integrated, happy persons. Our high school usually had a good football team. In the fall the coaches watched over the varsity like mother hens. If a varsity athlete was failing academically, the coaches would make sure that he was tutored. Conferences between teachers and coaches were frequent—and productive. But we didn't give that same tender loving care to the nonathlete, the junior girl who was shy and withdrawn because of acne, or the sophomore boy who walked the streets at night rather than fight his drunken father. And what about all the kids who lost a mother or father? Sure, we tried to help them through the initial shock and grief. We dutifully attended the wake services and the funeral masses, but many of us failed to hold their hands and heal their grieving hearts as they moved through their high school years without a mother or father.

At St. Joseph Academy in Cleveland, the administrative team headed by Sister Judith Cauley, C.S.J., has established various support groups for students who have lost a parent or whose families are breaking up because of divorce or alcoholism. These groups meet regularly and have contributed much to healing and mending the brokenness in some students' lives. This school is typical of most high schools. Some of these students are hurting badly because they have been affected by incidents of violence, incest, drunkenness, divorce, or suicide. They leave the classroom every day and go back into homes where there is a lot of anger, bitterness, and hostility. Can religious who have left the high school classroom for other kinds of ministry be persuaded to return to minister to the wounded families of these students?

The song that introduces NBC's Emmy-winning comedy series "Cheers" tells of a bar, "a place where everyone knows your name." That's what school should be: a place where the principal, the faculty, the staff, and others make a special effort not only to know everybody's name but also to know the names of everybody's family.

4. Make a concerted and positive effort to help students understand sex and their own sexuality. This can be done, I believe, by doing the following:

- Teaching genetics and its importance in establishing sound marriages and strong family relationships
- Involving more well-adjusted married people in the teaching of sexuality
- Using literature to teach sex education and the related issues: masturbation, birth control, premarital sex, homosexuality, abortion, impotence, rape, incest
- Teaching morality through case studies, using Lawrence Kohlberg's stages of moral development
- Providing a forum where students can freely question and challenge the church's teachings on sexual morality; such open discussion could lead students to talk about the wisdom of church teaching and the shallowness of the Playboy philosophy that so permeates our culture
- Avoiding judgment about unmarried couples living in sin and acknowledging that marriage for them might be the greater sin

Many a graduate remembers his or her Catholic high school as a place where "religion was crammed down my throat." Wouldn't it be nice if they could remember their high schools as places where they were challenged to come to terms with their individuality and sexuality?

5. Schedule in the curriculum a four-year leadership course that is open to all students. In every high school there are students who are outstanding because of intelligence, good looks, and athletic ability. These people usually become class or student council officers. But many others who melt into the woodwork have the potential for leader-

In every shy child an assertive one is wildly signalling to be let out

ship, too, and should be taught leadership skills such as assertiveness, the art of negotiating, problem solving, and conflict resolution.

That we sometimes underestimate the potential of people—young and old—was brought home to me some years ago when I was working as a consultant to a neighborhood group that was trying to solve problems of vandalism, muggings, and robberies by truants in the junior high school. The group chose as their leader a woman named Patricia. She would not have been my choice. She was overweight and her mistakes in grammar painfully testified to the fact that she probably did not complete a grade school education. She, her husband, and her children had moved to the city from the back hills of a southern state. She appeared shy and was conscious of the twang in her voice when she got up to speak. She was deeply concerned, however, about her children and the fact that truants were depriving them of an education.

I was amazed at her leadership abilities. She was well organized and knowledgeable. She could get people to share their ideas, convictions, and feelings. And she had the courage on a few occasions to go downtown and address the school board in public session. Where did she acquire her confidence and skills?

Patricia told me that as a child she was very shy and withdrawn. She was terrified of speaking to more than one person. When she came to Cleveland, however, she had the good fortune to meet a Protestant minister, a woman, who encouraged her to enroll in an empowerment class that she was teaching. That course changed her life.

In our schools there are plenty of little Patricias (and Patricks) who are shy and withdrawn but of whom many have leadership potential. In *The Unquiet Grave* (Harper & Brothers, 1945), Cyril Connolly says, "Imprisoned in every fat man a thin one is wildly signalling to be let out." Can we change that to read, "In every shy child an assertive one is wildly signalling to be let out"? An important function of the school is to make sure that the assertive child comes out.

6. Require graduating seniors to have completed a number of projects that emphasize an interdisciplinary approach. A few years ago I met a young college student named Matthew Patrick on a flight to Los Angeles. He was attending Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts. He described Hampshire as a modern liberal arts college in that graduation depends not on the number of credits earned but on the number of projects completed. Intrigued, I asked Matthew to elaborate.

"I can take any course offered at my college or any other area college as long as it helps me complete my project."

"Tell me about one of your projects."

"Well," he said, "I'm interested in producing films. Right now I am working on a low budget, full-length movie. That's just one of my projects. Another is a five-minute film called *Triptychs*. It won me a Junior Academy Award. That's why I'm on this plane. Tomorrow night I'll receive the award at ceremonies in Hollywood."

I've never met anyone who was more excited about education. Matthew told me that he could have gone to Yale, where his father is a full professor, but Yale was too structured and rigid and he could never thrive in that kind of environment. At Hampshire he was free to be his creative self.

Is it possible for high schools to offer students opportunities for similar creative experiences? I think so. But it will require an administration and faculty with imagination, vision, and the willingness to work probably harder than at any other time in their careers. It will mean involving people in business, industry, and government who are not "certified" but who have a wealth of good ideas and experience that they are willing to pass on to students at no charge.

Every community, whether large or small, has well-known persons who would be delighted to do something for a school for a few hours each week. With the number of retirees increasing each year, more talented and experienced people become available as resource persons for such projects. A survey of any retirement community will reveal businessmen, teachers, doctors, lawyers, accountants, librarians—all looking for something to do. Asking them to be consultants to students and their projects could do much for their morale and could quite possibly improve the morale of students.

The implementation of many of the above recommendations will be challenging and difficult. The principal must be tough-skinned and willing to take a lot of heat. He or she will need a good sense of humor; perhaps having a jester or clown in residence might be appropriate.

If you happen to see an older woman with an oversized Mexican handbag, hire her—especially if she tells you she knows how to make laughter flow through the curriculum.

Reflections on Initial Formation

Joel Giallanza, c.s.c.
and
John Gleason, c.s.c.

Contemporary novitiate formation is exhilarating and exhausting, fulfilling and frustrating, graced and grating, inviting and intimidating, provocative and prolonged, mystical and mundane. Compared with the career standards for most ministries, our time in formation work was not very long: for John it was eight years (five as Director of Novices); for Joel, six years (two as Assistant Director). Subjectively, however, those terms in office often seem much longer, and they have presented many more contradictions besides those listed in the preceding litany. Still, we recognize the richness of our years in the novitiate, and we know that we have yet more to learn about all that the Lord has done for us through this ministry.

The one truth that more than any other became increasingly clear to us over these past years is that it is the Lord who forms religious; he alone gives the grace necessary for the commitment to this way of life. We have reminded ourselves of that truth again and again, not so much because we might forget it, but to deepen our conviction that novitiate formation is more than the combination of ideas and programs we have orchestrated. It has given us hope when we were in the pits, and humility when we were on the peaks. It is in the context of this first truth of religious formation that we write these present reflections. Our hope is simply to support and encourage other formation personnel by sharing the fruits of our experience.

The ministry of novitiate formation has myriad aspects; and as the new Code of Canon Law is implemented, yet more aspects may come into view. For this reason, we have chosen to focus on those areas that in our experience are among those most frequently discussed by formation personnel as well as by those in major positions of religious authority: prenovitiate programs, the novitiate experience itself, evaluation of the novitiate experience, and finally, the role of those in authority. In all of these areas, we will emphasize formation for the apostolic religious life.

BEFORE NOVITIATE BEGINS

The novitiate for which we were responsible was used by six provinces of our congregation, five of them in the United States and one in Canada. Three of the six are provinces of priests; the other three are provinces of brothers. This interprovincial setting gave us the opportunity to see at close range the wide spectrum of approaches to and expectations of formation found in the prenovitiate programs of the provinces. In effect, the novitiate was a melting pot that brought together people with widely varying attitudes toward novitiate formation and even more widely varying levels of readiness for it.

This diversity was both an advantage and a disadvantage. It was an advantage in that the novices were exposed to a segment of the congregation

larger than their own provinces and thus were able to form friendships with novices from other provinces that would last even after they returned to their own provinces upon completing the novitiate. In a word, their horizons had been broadened, and they had, we hoped, become less susceptible to insularity. Diversity was a disadvantage in that the candidates (prenovices) were not always prepared adequately for the novitiate experience. In some individuals, the level of maturity was so out of balance with the level of faith that the first few months of the novitiate program had to be spent working toward the point where their experience of the novitiate could really start. We learned quickly that becoming a canonical novice was not necessarily simultaneous with becoming a novice for the religious life.

We do not believe that this diversity was the consequence of the unique interprovincial nature of our program, for we know of formation personnel responsible for single-province novitiate programs who have had similar experiences. It is easy enough to speak of tailoring the program to accommodate a particular group, and we tried to do this for every group with which we worked; however, canon law, congregational formation policies, and the sometimes subtle pressure from the community ("get them professed, we need more people") all contributed to the difficulties encountered in translating any accommodations from theory into practice.

There are many aspects of prenovitiate formation that could be addressed; our concern here, however, is to lay the groundwork for a bridge of continuity between the prenovitiate and the novitiate experiences. Therefore, we will direct our attention to an area that was of consistent concern for us: the requisite qualities for entering the novitiate.

PREPARATION FOR ENTRANCE

The novitiate provides an environment that nurtures a growing vocation; it does not give birth to the vocation. The novitiate builds upon what is already underway in a person's life. The Sacred Congregation for Religious and for Secular Institutes, in its *Instruction on the Renewal of Religious Formation*, speaks in similar terms.

> In the formation cycle the novitiate must retain its irreplaceable and privileged role as the first initiation into religious life. This goal cannot be attained unless the future novice possesses a minimum of human and spiritual preparation which must not only be verified but, very often, also completed. In fact, for each candidate the novitiate should come at the moment when, aware of God's call, the person has reached that degree of human and spiritual maturity which will allow him/her to decide to respond to this call with sufficient and proper responsibility and freedom. . . . Most of the

difficulties encountered today in the formation of novices are usually due to the fact that when they were admitted they did not have the required maturity. (#4)

The designation we give to this "minimum of human and spiritual preparation" requisite for entrance into the novitiate is *relative discernment*. Our understanding of relative discernment is simply this: From among the options for living the Christian faith within the church that lie before a person, that person chooses to pursue and to explore further the already growing conviction that the Lord is calling him/her to the religious life. The arena for that pursuit and exploration is the novitiate; in other words, the novitiate presumes the beginnings of a vocation to the religious life. Without this relative discernment, the novitiate is undermined insofar as it needs to compensate for weaknesses in the prenovitiate programs as well as maintain its own objectives.

How does this relative discernment translate into the values and behaviors required of those seeking entrance into the novitiate? Or, to put the question in another way, what should the prenovitiate formation personnel be working toward and looking for before they approve a person's entry into the novitiate? To answer this question we will identify and discuss some elements of relative discernment. Our list is neither exhaustive nor ordered by priority; however, it includes the elements that have been of most concern to us.

EIGHT AREAS IDENTIFIED

First, candidates need *basic knowledge of the Catholic faith*. In the past, this could be and probably was assumed, given the Catholic education and family environment from which novices usually came, but it can be assumed no longer. Today there is often something of a catechetical vacuum in those entering religious life. Many need answers to some basic questions about Christian life in the Catholic church before they can even begin to ask questions about the specifics of religious life; thus, it may be necessary to include a basic catechesis in prenovitiate programs for those with less extensive background and previous involvement in the church. Many candidates base their choice of the religious life on conversion experiences, which they view as indicating that the Lord is calling them to this vocation, but the lived reality of such experiences needs the test of time. To say "I love Jesus" is simply not equivalent to readiness for the novitiate, or even for the prenovitiate program.

The second element is *prayer*. Meditation, familiarity with the Scriptures, and spiritual direction should not be completely new experiences for the novice. Admittedly, the novitiate does address these areas extensively and intensively; nevertheless, some general discipline that reflects the com-

munity's life of prayer should be established and monitored in prenovitiate programs.

The third area is *comfort with affectivity*. As prospective members of a community, incoming novices should have the ability to articulate their feelings and opinions in response to a situation or issue and the willingness to develop that capacity further. Self-revelation and the ability to express needs and desires clearly and directly are fundamental skills for personal and communal growth in the novitiate. A related issue is the novices' comfort with their own sexual identity, whatever their basic orientation. They must come to recognize themselves as holy persons created and redeemed by God within a sexual context. They must come to know and accept themselves as lovable, not in spite of their sexuality, but within and through it.

It seems that today more of those entering religious life have been genitally active before their initial contacts with the community than have been in the past. We do not believe that previous genital abstinence in and of itself constitutes the basis for a celibate commitment; however, prenovitiate programs must be attentive to candidates' sexual experiences in order to help them understand what celibate love is and how to nurture such a love within them. Thus, fidelity to celibacy (not merely the capacity for it) must be clearly understood and manifested in the prenovitiate setting. In addition, more of those applying for admission have had experience with consciousness-altering drugs. Our concern here is with the residual impact of such experiences, which can adversely affect the person's ability to cope constructively and realistically with everyday tensions and frustrations. Prenovitiate personnel must be aware of the candidates' history in this regard and observe their responses to daily ups and downs. They should have access to psychological and medical personnel who could be of assistance if needed.

Fourth, candidates must show *personal independence*. Even with its necessary procedures and guidelines, formation is not an assembly line that excuses the individual from any responsibility for or investment in the process. Those entering the novitiate must be willing to assume responsibility for their formation in conjunction with the formation personnel. Furthermore, they must be willing to give and receive affirmation and challenge in order to enhance the quality of their religious life. The candidates should have the desire to learn about the community, but they should not come to the novitiate with the attitude that they should be told everything they are to do.

Fifth, candidates must acquire *social comfort*. This quality flows from the preceding ones. As persons who will live in community and be involved in ministry, candidates must develop a capacity for responding appropriately to the situations that arise in their daily life. Can they engage in and sustain a conversation appropriate to a particular

Formation is not an assembly line that excuses the individual from any responsibility for or investment in the process

setting? Does their awkwardness with self and others cause them to retreat into silliness or even isolation? Do they have a sense of the proper attire for social and professional situations? Do they constantly have to be reminded that just anything cannot be worn everywhere? Prenovitiate personnel should not assume that "all of this will be taken care of in the novitiate"; in fact, they should have access to supportive counseling services to which they could refer candidates when necessary. Some short-term counseling to address immediate problems can certainly be done in the novitiate; but extensive counseling and psychotherapy are extraneous to the purpose of the novitiate.

Sixth, candidates must have *intellectual curiosity*. A high I.Q. is not in itself an indicator of a religious vocation; nevertheless, a candidate should have developed good study habits before entering the novitiate. In addition, contemporary novitiate formation requires a willingness to read and to research, to learn and to question, to ponder and to discuss pertinent issues.

Seventh, candidates must show *generosity*. Community and ministry, prayer and the vows, all demand self-giving and self-sacrifice. Laziness and selfishness must be challenged as qualities unsuitable for Christian and religious life. The generosity of which we speak here is not an ethereal abstraction: it is manifest most clearly in the care, consistency, and willingness with which persons perform daily household tasks, and in their giving more of themselves (in both time and resources) than the minimum expected.

Finally, and possibly most important, there must be *a genuine desire and a free decision on the part of the candidate to enter the novitiate*. The novitiate cannot be undertaken merely because "it's time to move on," whether the person is ready or not. The decision must be made in concert with a spiritual director and the prenovitiate formation personnel. Our experience has been that some novices would have benefited greatly had their prenovitiate program included the possibility of an extension. In the end, it is a matter of justice to the candidate.

> # The novitiate is not an environment into which novices come to "find themselves"

Our experience has also led us to believe that large formation settings are impersonal and generally do not reflect well (if at all) the living situations of other community members. They foster a dependent, institutional attitude that distances the candidates from many of the common tasks required of most of the people to whom they will minister. Moreover, large settings make it harder for the formation personnel to know the candidates personally.

Small formation settings, on the other hand, encourage candidates to grow in self-possession and self-confidence, to take responsibility in the formation process, and to make themselves accountable. Small settings nurture generosity in everyday tasks and broaden the world that candidates create for themselves; moreover, they afford the formation personnel a closer view of the strengths and weaknesses of the candidates as unique individuals.

We readily confess our own bias for the smaller formation setting, and we have discovered that we are not alone. Our convictions have been supported by many religious involved in prenovitiate and novitiate formation, both within and outside our own congregation.

NOVITIATE REQUIRES MATURITY

In light of what has been said thus far, two preliminary assumptions about the novitiate itself emerge. First, since we believe that the novitiate is an adult experience, we assume some basic maturity in the novices. The novitiate is not an environment into which the novices come to "find themselves"; nor is it a place that provides a philosophical framework for searching out the meaning of life; nor is it a time to be used for growing up; and it is certainly not a haven into which one escapes from the world. The novitiate assumes that novices have some sense of the direction they want to take in life, and are therefore willing to focus their energy and effort on confirming that direction in consultation with other adults.

Second, we assume that novices have made a relative discernment regarding their vocation to the religious life. The novitiate is not a catechetical school in which one becomes a Christian; nor is it a department store where the person browses around in the religious life section and then becomes a novice with the attitude "I'll try it and see if I like it"; least of all is it an endurance test that the novice must "get over and done with," so that he/she can move on to the real world. The novitiate presupposes basic Christianity; hence, novices must have an emerging conviction about their call from the Lord to live their Christian faith in a particular way, the religious life.

These preliminary assumptions are not intellectual creations. During the course of our ministry in the novitiate, we have worked with novices who lacked basic maturity or relative discernment or both; in every case, the primary purpose of the novitiate was distorted or its progress hampered in varying degrees until these lacks were remedied by or for the novices. These same assumptions are implied in the *Decree on the Appropriate Renewal of the Religious Life* from the Second Vatican Council.

> As regards the formation to be imparted in the novitiate in institutes dedicated to the works of the apostolate, it is evident that greater attention should be paid to preparing the novices, in the beginning and more directly, for the type of life or the activities which will be theirs in the future, and to teaching them how to realize in their lives in progressive stages that cohesive unity whereby contemplation and apostolic activity are closely linked together. . . . The achievement of this unity requires a proper understanding of the realities of the supernatural life and the paths leading to a supernatural love for God and for others, finding expression at times in the solitude of intimate communion with the Lord and at others in the generous giving of self to apostolic activity. (#5)

A PURPOSEFUL PROGRAM

Before commenting on the novitiate experience, we want to acknowledge that it is not really possible to construct an ideal and universal novitiate program. The unique heritage and spirituality of each religious community, as well as its particular apostolic thrust within the church, will be decisive factors in the design of its formation program. Moreover, as the new Code of Canon Law takes effect, some necessary adjustments may determine that design.

Thus, our starting point will be a simple question: Why have a novitiate? The most obvious answer is that the church requires one of all canonically approved religious congregations. A fuller answer is provided by the document just quoted, which states clearly that the primary purpose of

the novitiate lies in "its irreplaceable and privileged role as the first initiation into religious life." More specifically, the novitiate provides an environment that facilitates a discernment—by the novices and by the formation personnel—of the novices' ability and willingness to live the religious life.

When translating this environment for discernment into the daily workings of a novitiate program, we were guided by these three principles:

1. *The novitiate experience must be designed to strengthen the novices' commitment to the Christian way of life.* The emphasis here is on novices' relationship with the Lord in prayer, in ministry, and as a member of the church. The novices must understand that even before becoming members of a religious community, they are Christians first of all. The Christian way of life, following the example of Jesus, entails a personal discipline of prayer, a desire to place one's gifts and talents at the disposal of others through ministry, and an active involvement in the church. This first principle is extremely important in identifying the novices' motivation for seeking entrance into religious life. One need not be a religious to live the Christian life, but one must be a Christian to live the religious life. The clarification of this point is an essential element of vocational discernment.

2. *The novitiate experience must be designed explicitly to develop the novices' understanding and living of religious life within a particular congregation.* The emphasis here is on the heritage, mode of commitment (vows), and way of life of the community. This principle lies at the heart of novitiate formation. The *Instruction on the Renewal of Religious Formation* states: "Religious life begins with the novitiate. Whatever may be the special aim of the institute, the principal purpose of the novitiate is to initiate the novice into the essential and primary requirements of the religious life and also, in view of a greater charity, to implement the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty, and obedience" (#13).

3. *The novitiate experience must be designed to support and enhance the novices' growth as human beings.* The emphasis here is on the continued development of the personal and affective qualities and capabilities necessary for living and working with others. This principle fosters the fulfillment of the first two, and they in turn foster its fulfillment: for the qualities and capabilities this principle requires provide an arena in which the fundamental commitment to Christianity flourishes and the understanding and living of religious life unfold; at the same time, those qualities and capabilities are born of and fed by that commitment, understanding, and living.

In practice, these three principles cannot be separated, nor can they be arranged in any absolute order of priority. Since a novitiate program is shaped for the benefit of the novices, any one of these principles may become the primary concern of the formation personnel at any point during the novices' progress. Nevertheless, all three principles remain essential to the process of vocational discernment. Further, the specifications for implementing these principles emerge from each congregation's character and charism as articulated in its constitutions and rules. The emphases mentioned under each principle form a sketch of the basic curriculum proper to novitiate formation. Supplementary readings, guest speakers, and, if possible, intercongregational activities are very helpful in expanding the curriculum and in building upon the input provided by the formation personnel.

Much of what we believe about the novitiate experience has been implied already in our comments on the prenovitiate program, and more can be inferred from what we will say regarding evaluations. Above all, however, we believe that the novitiate should be an experience that deepens the novices' faith-conviction that they are specially and uniquely loved and chosen by the Lord. Everything else finds its meaning in that conviction.

EVALUATING THE EXPERIENCE

The spirit of the following statement, from the New England bishops' "Letter on Some Foundational Aspects of Priestly Formation," has been echoed many times by major superiors of religious congregations. Though written "to be of assistance to all those directly and immediately involved in priestly formation," the concerns expressed by the bishops are equally applicable to the formation of religious.

> The ministry of vocational discernment requires experience, alertness and great care. It cannot be done in haste. Yet in this day of constant activity, all of you experience strong demands in other areas. . . . Hence, there can be the temptation to regard the work of evaluation or vocational discernment as one task among many. While recognizing the other important areas in which you are involved within and without the seminary (novitiate), we consider the evaluation and voting on students (novices) to be by far your most important task for the church. We plead with you to consider it so also, and to give it the time, the effort and the prayer it demands. (III, 4)

The litany of descriptive adjectives that opened this article characterizes many aspects of novitiate formation, but especially the periods of evaluation. The importance and necessity of such periods are unquestioned; it is simple justice that the novices should receive encouragement and challenge con-

Prerequisites For Entering Novitiate

Free Decision

Genuine Desire

Intellectual Curiosity

Personal Independence

Social Comfort

Generosity

Basic Knowledge of Catholic Faith

Comfort With Affectivity

Prayer
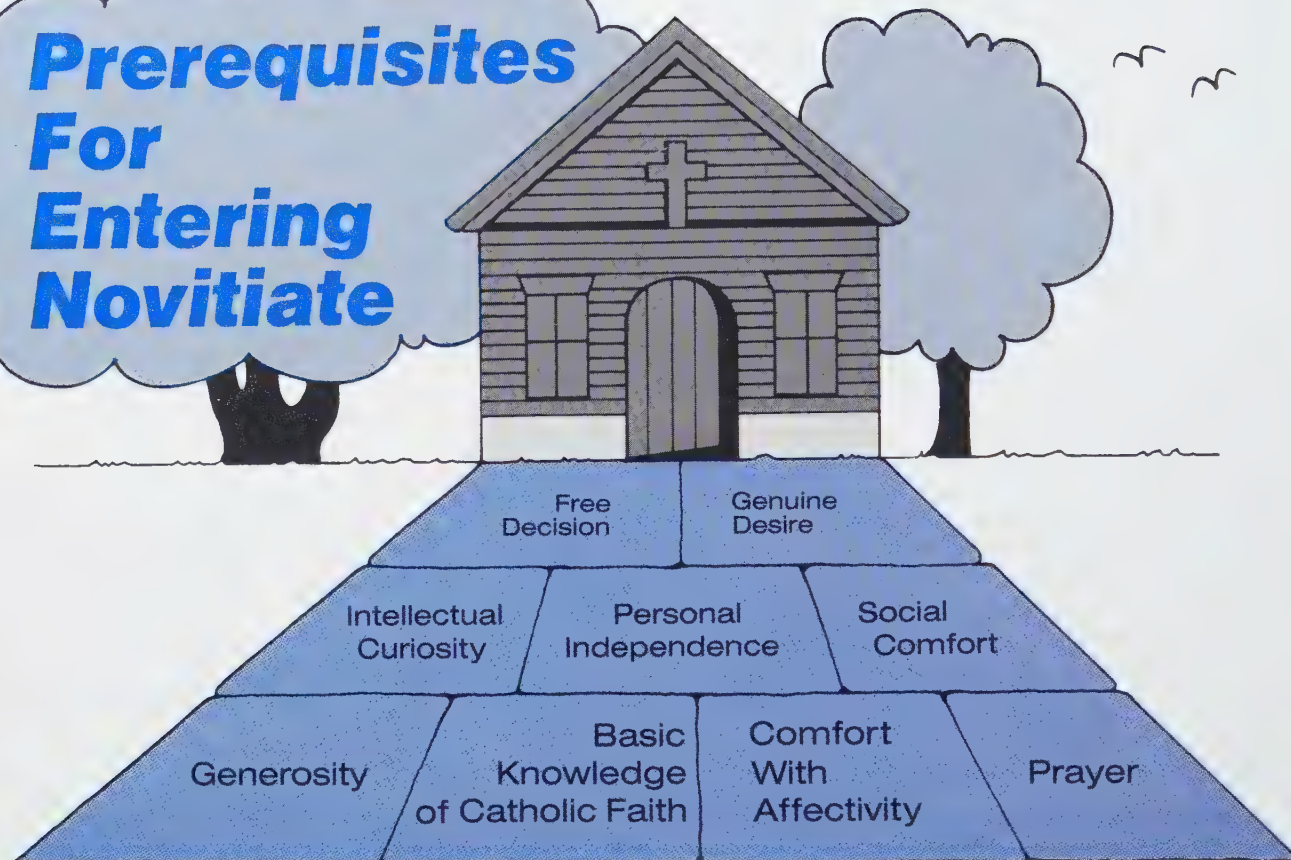
cerning their development in light of the community's expectations. Still, however, evaluations are accompanied by varying degrees of anxiety, both for the novices and for the novitiate personnel.

The method of evaluation used depends on the number of personnel, the number of novices, and the length of the novitiate program. Our own experience has taught us that no single method is universally applicable to every novitiate program, nor even to every group of novices within the same basic program. Thus, while maintaining the importance and seriousness of the evaluative periods, we utilized whatever process we believed would best enhance the continued growth of the novices. At times, this even necessitated varying the specifics of the evaluation process from novice to novice. Regardless of the methods used, the goal must always be the good of the novices and their development as persons seeking to commit themselves to religious life.

We will focus our comments on two areas that are major concerns for formation personnel: the criteria for evaluations—that is, those personal qualities in the novices that point toward a vocation to the religious life—and the impact on formation personnel.

Criteria for Evaluations. The criteria for evalua-

tions should flow from and be consistent with the principles of the novitiate program. Therefore, the criteria we propose here will parallel the three principles that we identified earlier.

Commitment to Christian life. Since the novitiate experience seeks to strengthen the novices' commitment to the Christian way of life, the novices should show a desire to deepen their fidelity to the example of Jesus. This desire is manifested by

1. willingness to be involved in the mission of the church and participation in its sacramental life
2. fidelity to individual and communal prayer
3. growing appreciation of reading and praying the Scriptures as a means of reflecting on life experiences in the light of God's word
4. facility with some form of quiet, listening prayer as part of personal discipline
5. willingness, ability, and hunger to minister
6. active involvement in all aspects of the novitiate program

Understanding and living religious life. Since the novitiate experience seeks to develop the novices' understanding and living of religious life, the novices should show a desire to deepen their fidelity to the ideals of religious life within the community.

This desire is manifested by

1. understanding and working knowledge of the congregation's constitutions, of the responsibilities and obligations inherent in them, and of their spirit
2. willingness and ability to live in fidelity to those constitutions
3. willingness and ability to live the specific form of commitment proper to the community (vows, promise, oath)
4. ability to live and work in community, with its diversity of ages and personalities, and to resolve personal and communal conflicts productively and charitably
5. acceptance of personal responsibility for formation (that is, the novices should be able to set personal goals and work toward them realistically; their use of time and resources should reflect the value of prayer, community, and ministry; and they should recognize the importance of seeking and receiving assistance from others in their development)

Support for growth. Since the novitiate experience seeks to support the novices' growth as human beings, the novices should show a desire to nurture and enhance their personal strengths and to confront and transform their weaknesses. This desire is manifested by

1. a balanced sense of independence and a healthy strength of character (that is, the novices should be able to express their opinions in community gatherings clearly and without fear in the face of opposition and challenge)
2. increasing self-acceptance that acknowledges personal imperfections and weaknesses and accepts others as imperfect, weak, and struggling
3. inner freedom that facilitates the novices' decision to make the first commitment in the community (that is, in concert with the formation personnel, the novices' decision is free from compulsion and from the constrictions of having no alternatives in life: to be free to stay, the novices must be free to leave)

Other criteria may emerge from the special character of each religious community, and even the ones identified here will take on different colors and shades in other novitiate programs. As with the guiding principles themselves, these criteria cannot be separated and categorized except for purposes of explanation and clarification. Whatever method of evaluation these criteria are incorporated into, the goal must remain the growth of the novices and the discernment of their vocation. Finally, the New England bishops remind us:

It is possible and it is certainly the will of God that human beings, enlightened by divine grace, make

Novices should show a desire to nurture and enhance their personal strengths and to confront and transform their weaknesses

a human judgment concerning a divine vocation and that they have the courage to act on that judgment. The vocation is from God, of course, but the church must determine if the vocation is truly present in a particular case. We do not consider that this judgment involves some kind of exotic or mystical insight. It does require the invoking of divine help, but it requires as well our best sense of judgment, experience, and the ability to learn from our mistakes. (I)

Impact on Personnel. From the moment that new novices walk through the front door and the group gets underway, formation personnel experience an array of emotional and spiritual responses to them. Sometimes it is the experience of walking on holy and healthy ground, and sometimes of walking on hollow and hostile ground. Such responses are not confined to periods of evaluation, though such periods may magnify them; they are constantly present in all aspects of novitiate formation. Each year there are seminars, workshops, and conferences designed to help formation personnel explore and understand these responses. Thus, our intention here is not to analyze but simply to identify some of the feelings we experienced, in the hope that this will help formation personnel to recognize and accept their own responses as a natural part of this ministry. We also cite the context in which these feelings usually, though not invariably, emerged.

Nervousness/Anxiety: The whole process of a new group's arrival—meeting and getting to know them and helping them to move in (all the while knowing that they are "checking us out")—always caused us some anxiety.
Separation: The absence of the previous group brought a sense of loss and turned the novitiate into unfamiliar territory filled with new faces and new concerns.
Comfort/Wonder: As the initial encounters gave way to an increasing familiarity, we wondered what each group held in store for us.
Weariness/Boredom: The repetition and routine of

> # The experience of challenging and confronting novices and calling them to accountability can be a very lonely one

the experience can become tedious. So, even though we often felt, "Here we go again," we would remind ourselves that for this particular group the novitiate was a new experience.

Anger: There were times when novices resisted the decisions made and the directions taken, and we felt impatient and angry. But there were also times when our impatience and anger resulted from our own second-guessing or procrastinating about those decisions and directions.

Frustration: We encouraged the novices to take responsibility for their own formation; thus, it was irritating when we found it necessary to point out areas where they should take the initiative. Also frustrating were those occasions when their expectations of us or the program far exceeded the reality.

Loneliness: (1) The experience of challenging the novices, confronting them, and calling them to accountability can be a very lonely one, especially when the principle at stake is misunderstood or not accepted. We felt this loneliness more intensely when individual novices chose to avoid us; at such times we felt frustrated that the issue was not being discussed and guilty over having brought it up at all. (2) There often seemed to be a distance between the novices and us, one that stemmed from the nature of the ministry itself: formation personnel are mentors and guides rather than peers and friends. Our relationships with other community members helped us greatly by reaffirming our capacity for friendship, the awareness of which is sometimes dulled by novitiate responsibilities.

Helplessness/Uncertainty: Regular interviews and periods of evaluation brought us into the very heart of the novices' lives and vocational discernment. In that internal forum, there are no quick-fix solutions and no clear-cut guidelines for knowing what directions will best serve the novices' growth.

Jealousy: Guest speakers, spiritual directors, and other community members often reiterated the very same principles and concerns that we had presented to the novices. Almost invariably, the "outsiders" were applauded as wise, and we were dis-

missed as merely having the "same old hangups." We discovered that formation personnel usually live on a low-adulation diet.

Confusion: Feelings of attraction for or aversion toward the novices can make it hard to remain objective. Since justice demands that the novices be treated with objectivity, feelings of guilt and inconsistency easily emerge if the objectivity of the formation personnel seems to be compromised.

Disappointment/Discouragement: Because of our knowledge of the importance of formation ministry, the awareness of our own weaknesses, uncertainties, and inadequacies was disheartening at times.

Alienation: Other community members occasionally seemed uninterested in and critical of contemporary formation. Our encounters with such attitudes made us feel unsupported and far removed from our fellows, especially at community meetings. Furthermore, formation is not always seen as an engaging ministry; more than once we were asked: "You're at the novitiate, but what is your real ministry?"

Questioning: As each group finished the novitiate program, we could not help asking ourselves, What will become of them? Did we do the right things? Did we do enough?

Certainly there were times that elicited joy, unity, satisfaction, and a sense of accomplishment and purpose. But we have chosen to focus on feelings that were unsettling, precisely because they seemed to contradict our convictions about the ministry of formation and to hinder our fidelity to our responsibilities within it. We learned, over time, to remind ourselves frequently that ambivalent feelings are not an indisputable indication of compromise and inconsistency. Admittedly, this reminder did not automatically change our feelings, but it did give us a perspective for understanding them.

Much more is involved in evaluating the novitiate than we can discuss here. But even if everything could be said, faith would still challenge us to acknowledge that it is the Lord who forms religious, and he accomplishes his work through us, weak and imperfect as we are. The bishops' letter states: "We perform human acts, we make decisions using our best intelligence, relying on revelation and listening to our hearts—with the knowledge that the Lord is surely with us" (III, 3).

FOR THOSE IN AUTHORITY

Much of what has been said necessarily presupposes the involvement of people in authority, since their responsibilities include the acceptance of candidates into the novitiate, the design of novitiate programs, and the approval of novices' requests for incorporation into the community. Permit us, then, to speak to you as our associates in the ministry of formation.

First, it is essential that when you choose novitiate formation personnel, you provide them with sufficient time and opportunity for the necessary training and preparation before they begin this ministry. Past ministerial experiences, even when combined with the willingness to undertake an appointment to formation, do not necessarily equip a person with the human and spiritual knowledge and insight demanded by novitiate ministry.

Second, we caution you against appointing formation personnel to a multitude of committees. Meetings and projects that necessitate frequent absences from the novitiate can undermine the primary role of formation personnel in the discernment process. Moreover, they can take up the time set aside for occasional breaks from the novitiate environment. These breaks are vitally important, for the emotional and spiritual energy demanded by formation ministry is generally underestimated.

Third, we ask for your support in confronting and addressing those subtle pressures that can arise from the community's concern about small numbers in our formation programs. The acceptance of a candidate into the novitiate is not simultaneous with the approval for first commitment; in some cases, for the benefit of a novice, we may recommend an interruption or extension of the novitiate experience. Unless these possibilities are familiar to and accepted by the community, formation personnel are put in the position of having to defend their own decisions or those of a novice. (For congregations that include priests, since the novitiate usually precedes the completion of seminary studies, recommendations of this sort are often branded as an unnecessary delay of ordination. Such labeling undermines the primary role of the novitiate as the initiation into religious life.)

Finally, we are aware that your schedules are full and that your time is wanted by many others. Still, we ask you to consider spending a week at the novitiate in order to gain some firsthand experience of formation and to expand your familiarity with the perimeters of our ministry. This experience and familiarity will support and improve communication between us.

Your trust in and support of us in the decisions and recommendations we are called on to make are essential to the process of vocational discernment, and we deeply appreciate them.

SOIL FOR THE SEEDS

The novitiate gives only the first impulse to the formation of a religious: it provides the seed for a tree that bears fruit through a whole life of continual effort and growth. Novitiate personnel offer guidance and direction as soil for those seeds; yet formation itself remains the work of the Lord. Ultimately, the experience of the novitiate is rooted in the question that Jesus posed to his disciples after he washed their feet: "Do you know what I, your Lord, have done to you?" This is the question that challenges novices and formation personnel continually in every aspect of their lives.

Dry Drunk
Misery of Contradictions

I'm a drunk — but I'm not drinking now.
I used to flee in drink — now I flee in me.
I live inside of me — and misery is my name.
I say I know me — but I deny what I see.
I have to find the real me — yet I hate to look at self.
I can't face my weaknesses — and I project them on you.
I gaze at your bad points — so I don't see mine.
I pretend I'm big — and I cry over me.
I know I'm not much — but I want to be the hub of all.
I give up one moment — and fight you the next.
I can't face the possibles — but I want the impossible now.
I want comforts and hate pain — so I make me miserable.
I know I need discipline — yet I run the easy path away.
I hate my weaknesses — but I indulge them all.
I think the powerless are weak — yet I am weak in my power.
I'm just a drunk who won't drink — and I won't be me.

LORD, HELP ME ACCEPT MY POWERLESSNESS
SO I CAN HAVE YOUR STRENGTH!

Joseph A. Sommer, S.J.

Leadership: What Can and Should We Teach?

Robert Muccigrosso, Ph.D.

raining for leadership is a tricky business at best. On one hand, it is clear that in our age of specialization and individual responsibility, everyone should be trained to be a leader. On the other hand, it is equally clear, as most who have been involved in leadership-oriented training programs would concede, that leadership ability is something that springs intrinsically from the core of personhood and that consequently one simply cannot *teach* another to be a leader. There is a certain degree of readiness for leadership without which no one, no matter how well prepared academically, can become a truly effective practicing leader.

ESSENTIALS OF LEADERSHIP

James Gill's discussion of education for leadership (HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, Fall 1983) contains a list of the following twelve essentials to be learned for leadership: (1) readiness to take charge, (2) the habit of making just judgments, (3) the capacity to motivate, (4) openness to new ideas and opinions, (5) a sense of humor, (6) a variety of leadership styles, (7) effective decision making, (8) the art of inspiring others, (9) the ability to establish and maintain trust, (10) knowing how to relax, (11) patience with mistakes, and (12) clarity in communication and instruction.

To determine exactly what we need to include in the formal training for church leadership, we might usefully divide this list into three categories.

The first group comprises those qualities that are clearly teachable in the most basic sense of the word: *clarity in communication and instruction,* for instance, and *variety of leadership styles.* These can be communicated on a strictly cognitive level.

There is a second group of which the opposite is true: these qualities are so obviously tied to the personhood of the individual that to speak of "teaching" them in any sense is highly misleading. How do we train people to have a *sense of humor*? Is it a reasonable programmatic objective to train people in the *art of inspiring others*?

The third and largest group of objectives does not fall conveniently into either of these categories. What is true of the qualities in this group is perhaps also true of the great majority of the characteristics requisite for effective leadership: they are best understood as skills and understandings whose mastery will improve the leadership abilities of all individuals, but especially of those who possess the unteachable foundation of personal readiness to lead.

This last group, of course, is the most interesting to those responsible for programs designed to train leaders for the church. To identify the leadership skills that should be part of this training is a rea-

sonable goal. Although an exhaustive list is beyond my competence and would exceed the limited time and space available anyway, it is possible to identify the major areas of study. This is important because the skills associated with these areas are teachable and learnable, and they are often overlooked in the training we provide for our church leadership.

Dr. George Eppley (HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, Winter 1983) has rightly identified a sound liberal arts perspective and a solid theological framework as requisites for leadership. In addition to these, there are four major areas of concentration that demand our consideration: (1) organizational theory, (2) motivation theory, (3) conflict (resolution), and (4) decision making.

ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY

Most executive leadership is exercised in the context of organizations. This remains true in the church setting; whether we are working with parishes, religious communities, social action committees, or schools, what we seek to lead is a group of individuals in a meaningful (one hopes) relationship with one another that focuses on shared goals.

It seems obvious that understanding how people behave in groups should be essential to academic preparation for church leadership; yet more often than not leaders emerge from the ranks because of personal qualities—intelligence, personality, determination, and so forth— and upon acceding to leadership positions are suddenly faced with the necessity of learning those skills needed for survival. Though it is true that personal qualities by themselves are often sufficient to accomplish more than mere survival, it is probably just as true that some sense of how organizations work would help make the passage less painful and the outcomes more satisfactory.

Of particular relevance to the challenge faced by executive leadership in the church setting is an issue raised by Chris Argyris and explored by many other researchers: the potential for discordance between the goals of a complex organization and those of the individual operating within that organization and the consequent natural tendency of the organization to keep its members in states of perennial immaturity.

Adulthood is identifiable with autonomy, spontaneity, and creativity. These values are of great importance to the individual, but complex organizations in pursuit of complicated goals tend to subordinate them to the more generalized goals necessary to the accomplishment of institutional purposes. A skilled leader who understands the tensions implicit in this relationship can structure the organization's administrative policy and supervisory practices in such a way as to enhance the opportunity for individual growth while avoiding direct confrontation with organizational goals.

> Conflict is intrinsic to the human condition and is therefore unavoidable in any organization

The much-discussed Japanese approach represents a completely different view of the relationship between the organization and its members. The characteristic holistic concern for the individual member seems to be closely tied to Japanese social perspectives and thus may be hard to foster in our culture; nevertheless, an understanding of this different viewpoint can only broaden the leader's vision, in any setting. Nonspecialized career paths, slow evaluation and promotional policies, implicit rather than explicit control mechanisms, and collective responsibility—salient aspects of the Japanese approach—are stark departures from our own organizational mores.

The most valuable result of exposure to other viewpoints would not be the local adoption, or even adaptation, of a specific practice or approach, but rather the development of an organizational sense and sensitivity that would make a genuine contribution to more effective leadership. There are two issues specific to the church that church leaders might be able to handle more productively if they understood organizational theory better: the vocation issue and the question of women's role in the church.

MOTIVATION THEORY

The ability to motivate is of central importance to effective leadership, but it may be only partially teachable. It is possible that the ability to motivate others is too closely related to the personhood of the leader to be fully teachable or learnable; however, we certainly can maximize the motivational capacity of each individual if we teach certain basic understandings that have emerged from the literature.

Nobody, for instance, should be given license to lead without also being encouraged to read Abraham Maslow's classic *Human Motivation*. Maslow's formulation of a hierarchy of needs is more theoretical than based on hard data; nevertheless, it provides indispensable insights into how people are motivated to grow along a path that

> ## In theory at least, the days in which one became a leader in order to tell people what to do are in the past

begins with concern for personal safety and security and progresses to the rarely achieved status of self-actualization. Maslow may be read as the cornerstone of the enormous and often disappointingly shallow body of self-help literature so prominent in today's bookstores. Most of what is valuable in such literature was said by Maslow decades ago, and said more comprehensively and more entertainingly. Consequently, it is not surprising that since Maslow's time there has been an outpouring of research whose aim was to apply his formulations to various work settings. Some of this work is very useful, for example, Sergiovanni and Starratt's discussion of the relationships between motivation, morale, and organizational achievement.

Once again, the field we are discussing is too broad to be dealt with exhaustively here. A reasonable goal might be simply to provide church leadership with a better understanding of the various values that motivate different individuals in particular settings. The achievement of this goal might go far to improve the uneven record of the church as employer.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Conflict is intrinsic to the human condition and is therefore unavoidable in any organization. Unfortunately, many leaders have a poor understanding of conflict: they believe either that conflict is avoidable and thus should be worked around at all costs or that it is not resolvable and thus should be ignored. Such an attitude frequently leads to mistakes that have painful and long-lasting consequences.

Study of the work of Lewis Coser, who works from a sociological perspective, and Donald Bossart, who takes a specifically ecclesial approach, would provide the basis for an understanding that would help the leader to answer questions such as

● What are the recurrent personal sources of conflict in organizational settings?

● What are the organizational characteristics most likely to generate conflict?
● When is conflict a positive force?
● When is conflict avoidable?
● When might conflict be purposely instigated?
● What skills are needed for resolving conflict?

How different might the condition of the ecumenical movement be if conflict management were familiar ground to church leadership? How different might day-to-day life be in rectories, convents, and parish centers?

DECISION MAKING

The ability to make decisions is widely accepted as the single most important characteristic by which leadership is evaluated. Deciding can be productively viewed as the core activity of leadership because it is an essential part of the many other functions of leadership: allocating, motivating, directing, envisioning, evaluating. Because of its centrality, decision making has been discussed and studied more extensively than any other leadership function; consequently, I will limit myself to restating and clarifying some of what are generally held to be its cardinal principles.

First and foremost, a contemporary understanding of decision making begins with a presumptive bias against autocratic, authoritarian modes of decision making. Hardly anyone who is at all in touch with the psychological, sociological, and political atmosphere in which we live can still be ignorant of the dangers of this style of decision making. In theory at least, the days in which one became a leader in order to tell people what to do are in the past.

Why then do we still find ourselves living daily with the fallout of decisions made according to the old mindset, in which one person decides, either alone or through a distorted version of "consultation" that involves only those who can be counted on to share the leader's predilections?

A discussion that attempts to answer this question will constitute a model of the kinds of analysis of decision making that leadership should be capable of sustaining as an on-going process.

To begin with, we must assume the basic good will of most leaders. Leaders do not intend to make bad decisions or to reach their decisions in ways that antagonize or alienate. Nor is habit a satisfactory explanation for autocratic decisions, even in the church, which is steeped in and influenced by tradition. That decision making in the church still too often follows a feudal model reflects not the influence of habit and tradition but rather a convenient marriage between the existing organizational structure and the vision held by leaders. Regrettably, we are facing deeply held convictions that are based on partial understandings.

One of the questions that have never been fully answered in current leadership circles is *who* should be involved in *what* decisions. There is a consensus that decision making is not the exclusive prerogative of leaders, but it is still unclear how and by whom decisions should then be made.

The simplest answer is that people should be involved in decisions (1) that affect their lives significantly and (2) about which they have a degree of competence. This response is true as far as it goes, but it leaves too many loopholes, particularly for leaders who find it difficult to share responsibility for decisions. To what degree must a decision affect someone to make it logical that he or she be involved? Who is to judge the degree of an individual's competence?

This leads us to an even more basic question about participatory decision making: why consult others at all? In this case, the just answer, the one perhaps most commonly acted upon, is so partial as to be destructive: we consult because it is good for the morale of the group, which will "feel better" about the decision if it has played a role in reaching it.

In one sense, this response does not say enough at the affective level; in another sense, it says too much. To say that people "feel better" about decisions in which they have been involved does not do sufficient justice to the contemporary mindset of thinking individuals. Involvement in decision making is such a basic expectation today that the institution that ignores it does so at its own peril. The entire thrust of the contemporary movement is toward the fullest actualization of the individual, and this is antithetical to a mode of decision making in which others make decisions for us. Reaching so deep into the cultural consciousness as to be evident even in commercial campaigns for the armed services ("Be all that you can be!"), the contemporary person's need to be responsible for self cannot be ignored. Institutions that fail to recognize this risk irrelevance.

The most important reason why it is necessary to consult with others in reaching decisions, however, is simply that if we do, better decisions will ensue. This is easy to write and even easier to read, nod at, and proceed past, but very difficult to accept fully and internalize. To believe that "we" know better than "I" and to be sufficiently convinced of it to be able to act on it is indeed an elusive goal.

Nonetheless, the supportive research has been done, and the alternative models of decision-

PIECES IN THE LEADERSHIP PUZZLE
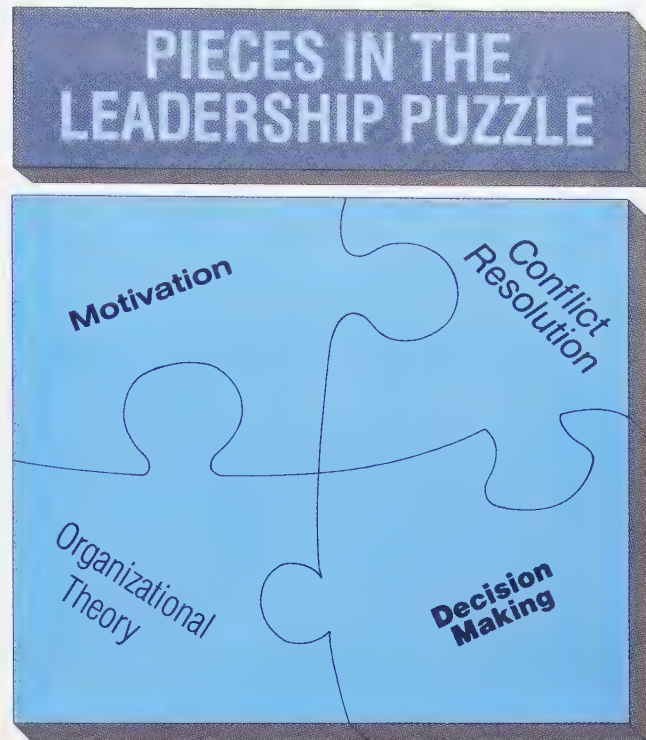
making structures are there to be studied and, one hopes, combined with the foundational good will we expect. The result can only be more effective decision making.

Organizational theory, motivation, conflict and conflict resolution, and *decision making*—four pieces of a fascinating puzzle, the solution of which will provide the world with that most critical need: visionary and effective church leadership.

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Psychological Aspects of Change

Donna Markham, O.P., Ph.D.

John Naisbitt, in his book *Megatrends*, invites a consideration of the psychological dimensions of change when he states, "There are cities and companies, unions and political parties [and, I would add, churches, parishes, and persons in ministry], in this country that are like dinosaurs waiting for the weather to change. The weather is not going to change. The very ground is shifting beneath us. And what is called for is nothing less than all of us reconceptualizing our roles." This observation of Naisbitt's clearly suggests that none of us escapes from the process of change. We must be about the continual rethinking and redefining of our purpose as persons in ministry and of our purpose as an organized institution, or we will, like the dinosaur, simply become ponderous, desiccated objects of curiosity in civilization's reservoir of museum pieces.

Ideally, we should become alert to changes around us, should anticipate the impact on our institutions and on ourselves, and should then respond. With this in mind, I would like to begin by focusing on some of the changes around us, the major forces in our current period of cultural transformation, and the questions and challenges that these changes pose to us as members of a believing community. Second, I will explore two opposing attitudes toward change and examine the psychological impact that each of these attitudes has on us. Last, I will discuss the maladaptive responses of persons who are having difficulty coping with the impact of change.

CURRENT DANGER OR OPPORTUNITY?

Any major transformation in the history of civilization has been preceded by a variety of social indicators. These indicators include an increase in the feeling of alienation; an increase in mental illness, violent crime, social disruption; and religious rigidity, or fundamentalism. Social analysts such as Fritjof Capra, John Naisbitt, and Marilyn Ferguson agree that many of these indicators are identical with the symptoms of our current age particularly in North American culture during the past decade. In times of historic change, these indicators have tended to appear one to three decades before the massive central transformation.

If we view change in the manner delineated by Arnold Toynbee, as a cyclical process of *genesis, growth, breakdown*, and *disintegration* eventually leading to a new genesis, we are likely to situate ourselves in a moment of history, church history as well as cultural history, that is wedged between a time of disintegration and a time of genesis. I find this conceptualization of Toynbee's particularly helpful in looking at our current reality with a sense of hope and courage.

Genesis consists of a transition from a static condition to dynamic activity. For example, on a personal level, the transition from a job that has become routine, boring, stagnant, and lacking in challenge to a new position that sparks creativity, along with mental and emotional stimulation, could result in personal developmental change. On a larger scale, the dynamic activity that virtually exploded as a result of the Second Vatican Council marked a radical genesis following the relatively static condition of institutional church life since medieval times. This was a classic example of the beginning of a major transformative period.

Growth continues as long as the response to the initial challenge continues to generate a momentum that carries it beyond a state of equilibrium into a condition of *overbalance* that presents itself as a fresh challenge. Continuing in this cycle, growth, change, and even crises are perceived primarily as opportunities.

The Chinese, always keenly aware of the connection between crisis, growth, and change, use two characters to make up the word "crisis": *wei-ji*, "danger" and "opportunity." Not all crisis or change is experienced as opportunity. If our attitudes toward and our experience of change are fraught with fear, anxiety, and a sense of impending danger, we begin to experience a loss of flexibility, a tightening up, in which the person, or the institution, becomes too rigid to adapt. This is the essential element in the experience of *breakdown*. Brittleness, whether it be emotional or systemic, leads to breakdown. Rather than relax their grip on something to allow for the refinement and development of expanded ways of thinking and re-

TOYNBEE'S VIEW OF CYCLICAL CHANGE

GROWTH · BREAKDOWN · GENESIS · DISINTEGRATION · OUR MOMENT IN HISTORY
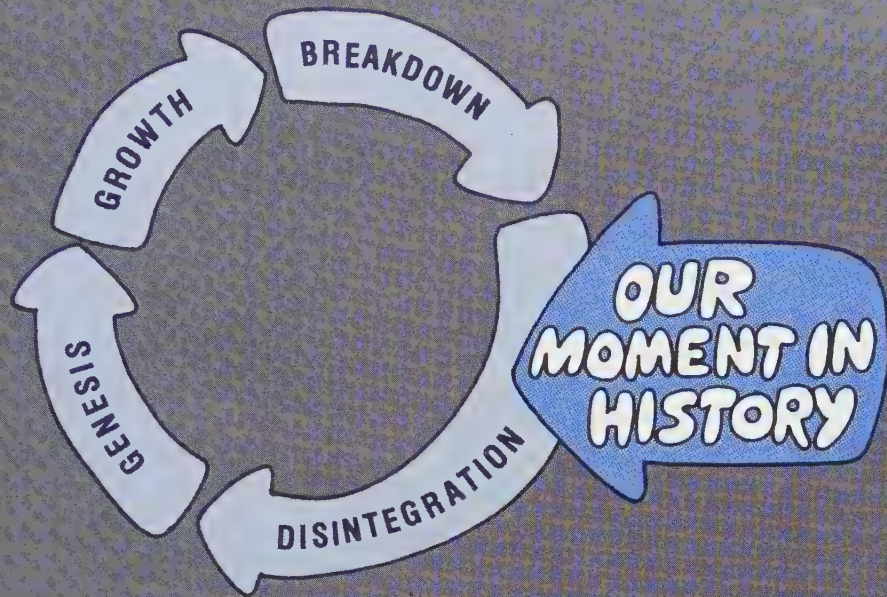
sponding, of questioning and evaluating, individuals or institutions in the process of breaking down essentially contract their consciousness, close in on themselves as a protective act, and become basically petrified, in both senses of the word: terrified, as well as rigid and lifeless.

Whereas growing movements, groups, and individuals display an almost endless resiliency, versatility, and enthusiasm, those in the process of *disintegration* exhibit uniformity, caution, lack of inventiveness, and a corporate mourning over the loss of what once was. This is accompanied by a loss of internal harmony, depletion of morale, and heightened internal discord.

EVIDENCE OF BREAKDOWN

The impetus provided by the Second Vatican Council has not been sufficient, for whatever reasons, to result in a continuing state of overbalance and evolutionary change. Our own recent experience of ecclesiastical structures reveals them to be tightening up, closing in, maintaining, and even returning to more rigid patterns of behavior—in other words, manifesting characteristics of breakdown and disintegration. Indeed, social theorists maintain that the entire world order is standing on the edge of a major paradigm shift that demands radically new ways of thinking about the old problems. The old patterns of conceptualizing are sorely deficient, and our resorting to them results in further breakdown and decay.

Both Toynbee and Capra suggest, however, that even in the midst of the painful process of breakdown and disintegration, an institution's ability to respond to challenges is not completely lost nor is an individual's ability to respond completely erad-

icated. The striking consistency with our own Christian belief in the experience of redemption is certainly apparent. Within the social realm, creative minorities of thinkers will arise predictably to carry on the process of challenge and response, and genesis will occur again.

Change, then, is inevitable, and will occur no matter how adamantly we resist it. It is well to note, however, that during a time of breakdown and disintegration, new paradigms are nearly always met with coolness and suspicion, perhaps with mockery and hostility, and are even attacked for their heresy. Such new ideas in the process of refinement and evaluation form the foundation for change. The greatest error is to deny the experience of breakdown, if it is occurring, simply because it is too discomforting to cope with it. As Capra indicates, transformations of this magnitude should not be avoided, but welcomed as the only escape from agony, collapse, or mummification. To deny what is occurring within ourselves, within our institutions, within our church, or within our country will result in far greater pain and ultimately will end in our self-destruction.

TWO OPPOSING VIEWS

What, then, are the attitudes that we might develop in the face of this period of radical transformation? Before answering, for purposes of concretizing, let us consider three major forces in our cultural transformation that deeply affect us in ministry in our church; then we will consider two different ways of responding to these changes.

1. Decline of Patriarchy. Indications of the shattering of a 3000-year history of patriarchal culture are evident all around us. Particularly in ministry

Alternate Pathways Leading To CHANGE

CHALLENGE — OPPORTUNITY — GROWTH — DANGER — BREAKDOWN — DISINTEGRATION — CHANGE (CRISIS)

we are aware of the impact of the women's movement and the increasing disdain on the part of many cognitively alert and socially attuned men as well as women for the rigid continuance of the patriarchal and hierarchical Catholic Church structure. They believe that the patriarchal system is declining and deplore all signs of the Catholic Church's resistance to this reality.

In addition, we are aware of personally changing images of God, who is no longer simply perceived as father, the stereotypical embodiment of male characteristics. We might ask ourselves: What is my *emotional* response to this cultural force as it manifests itself in my ministry? Is my tendency to deny, work against, be irritated by it? Or is my inclination to explore the implications, to try to encourage it, to be excited about expanding new images and concepts?

2. The Shift From an Insular to a Holistic View of Reality. It has also become increasingly evident that we cannot continue to view our lives in a compartmentalized fashion, independent and isolated, counting only on ourselves, defining ourselves as entities unto ourselves. We cannot view religion as separate from our political, social, and cultural life. Further, mechanistic divisions of clerics, lay people, and religious, each with their isolated parts to play in the functioning of the closed-system church-machine, are clearly inadequate. When operating like this, disastrous results have at times attested that something has been radically wrong. Ecumenism, planetary consciousness, political involvement, and shared responsibility are all issues that challenge us to transcend insular religious,

cultural, and national boundaries in efforts toward peacemaking.

Again, we might pose a question to ourselves: What is my emotional response to the blurring of the lines between these major areas in my life? Do I prefer to deal with institutional issues or parish issues; feel there is "enough to do here" and resist efforts that would demand moving out of my usual flow? Do I maintain an attitude of exploration, participation, and evaluation, and take risks to step outside of compartmentalized structures?

3. Movement From Centralization to Decentralization. It is well known that centralized structures are crumbling in Western society and that people are rebuilding those structures from the bottom up. Decentralization empowers persons to create change and is the great facilitator of social change.

Our attitudes toward autocratic leadership, centralized and unilateral decision making, control, and power, as well as toward the perception of "ownership" of parishes and institutions, will disclose our feelings about this major change in our culture. We are aware that the process of decentralization is occurring, and analysts tell us that it is a necessary movement in our culture, yet how much energy do we still expend attempting to centralize and control? We might ask ourselves, Who owns the parish institution? Who controls it? The movement to decentralize calls us to a profound relinquishing of possessiveness.

Although these are only three of the major forces that are factors in our cultural change, we may be able to examine some of our own psychological reactions in light of them.

ATTITUDES TOWARD CHANGE

Two ways of viewing change are, first, that change occurs as a result of struggle and conflict, the result of some force; or, second, that change is a natural tendency that is innate in all things and in all institutions. The first view of change is essentially a Western view based on social Darwinist and Marxist-Hegelian cultural dynamics. This view emphasizes the recurrent rhythm of change and the important role of struggle and conflict. Responding from this stance, we are usually in a resistive position, a reactive mode of responding. The second view is primarily an Eastern view in which change is envisioned as a harmonious, predictable occurrence that is welcomed and desired. Capra holds that all struggle in nature takes place within a wider context of cooperation, and in a time of transformation, conflict should be minimized. Clearly, he is advocating the Eastern perception and management of change. Responding from this mind-set, we are usually in a cooperative position. Although this view is optimal, perhaps, we Westerners find it difficult to adopt. It is hard for us to manage change in a way that minimizes conflict. We are accustomed to attacking our adversaries, moving against those who threaten us. It is difficult for us to imagine not reacting to others who hold opposing views, but rather acting with them to fashion the new.

Perhaps the difficulties we experience in trying to manage and adapt to change arise from the initial difficulty we have in conceptualizing change. Since most of us tend to view change as a disruption, an anxiety-provoking experience to be met with caution and suspicion, we would often prefer that it did not occur. When it does occur, we frequently find ourselves resistant.

Because we experience change as stressful and anxiety producing, exposing us to dangers that are perceived to be far greater than the inconveniences of the status quo, we are resistant. We often exhibit a greater desire to cope with present, known vexations than to chance unknown and perhaps grievous perils. Our resistance thus serves to protect us from the onslaught of anxiety. The irony is that the refusal to change, and the denial of change, can consume the psychic energy of a person or of an institution and result in a kind of personalized, depressive malaise.

FOUR UNHEALTHY RESPONSES

Those of us who are products of Western civilization can assume that we, along with the institutions of which we are members, will likely fall prey at times to maladaptive responses to change. Four characteristic maladaptive responses are *denial, paralyzing anxiety, pathological grieving,* and *rigidity.*

Denial is the antithesis of transformation. It is a

> **Denial represents an unconcious attempt to escape from the vulnerability that comes from standing on shaky ground**

means of attempting to make life more manageable, although at the same time it serves actually to diminish life. It is the most primitive and likely the most dangerous defense against change, one that results in the development of isolated and insulated relational styles. An extraordinary example of national denial in our rapidly changing technological age is evident in many people's attitudes toward nuclear war. Perhaps one of the most well-known feats of denial jargon is epitomized in the phrase "anticipatory retaliation." Denial can only result in the diminishment of life itself.

An example of personal denial may be readily apparent in the pastoral leader who interprets the present only as a repetition of the past and thereby denies the impetus of change. For example, "From time immemorial, people have had a hard time being obedient. It's nothing new, so don't take it too seriously."

Denial represents an unconscious attempt to escape from the vulnerability that comes from standing on shaky ground.

Paralytic anxiety is another maladaptive means of coping with change. It is one in which—although aware of the changes that are occurring—the individual or the institution is unable to engage in competent decision making, incapable of taking action in accord with change, and frozen into inactivity. Another manifestation of this type of response is seen in persons who regress at the time of change, that is, unconsciously return themselves psychologically to an earlier, safer stage of development. I suspect this tendency is being expressed in some current institutional directives, such as "The period of experimentation is over." Such a stand can result from intense fear, with a hidden desire to gain control again, stop the flow of change, or even return to the way it all "used to be" as an underlying motive. When such fear stands in the way of transformation, it is clearly unhealthy and maladaptive.

A third maladaptive response to change is *pathological grieving.* This is characterized by a sense of futility, meaninglessness, and despondency. The

institution's or the individual's response to change, in this type of reaction, is fraught with preoccupation with the prospect of its own demise, accompanied by a depressive, listless, or adamant refusal to become involved in the creation of the new. This response is most clearly identifiable in a loss of hope and a disregard for the fact that even in a time of disintegration, creative options will surface.

Rigidity is a fourth maladaptive response to change. This occurs when, in an attempt to contain the massive amounts of anxiety that the changing situation generates, the individual or the institution designs a tight system of external controls. For example, institutional authorities often react with increased legalism in an effort to keep things under control. An individual may exhibit this rigidity by a lack of flexibility in patterns of daily living, where the least deviation from a schedule is seen as disruptive and intolerable. The underlying message is "keep the environment under control, because everything is falling apart and breaking down on the inside."

POSITIVE RESPONSES POSSIBLE

If, on the other hand, we are able to envision change as an inevitable occurrence that can be anticipated and looked forward to, even though it will carry with it a share of pain and disruption, our responses are likely to be more constructive. Adaptive means of living in change include an identification and clarification of the situation, the maintenance of appropriate levels of anxiety, necessary grieving, and the formulation of open systems for evaluation.

The process of *identification* includes naming what is changing, how it is changing, and what the feelings and concerns are that arise as a result of the change. This is a version of the old belief that as soon as we are able to name what is happening, we claim a kind of power over it.

A second healthy response to change is the maintenance of an *appropriate level of anxiety*. Anxiety can be an agent of transformation, since it can give life to creativity. We know that a certain amount of anxiety is an essential element of any change and is actually an integral part of the whole evolutionary process.

No matter how open we are to change, all change is met with concurrent loss. *Grieving* allows emancipation from the past. It is not a denial of the past. Healthy grieving recognizes the beauty of the past and realizes that it was only part of what we now know. At the same time, in grieving over the past we are sharply aware that what is known today will be let go of tomorrow. Grieving is a continual reminder to us of our participation in ongoing transformation and conversion.

The *formulation of open systems for evaluation* is a fourth adaptive response to change. As change occurs, the effectiveness of the response is continually in need of assessment and evaluation. Healthy responses to change are adaptable and flexible, ready to shift direction as necessary. Adaptation stands in counterbalance to petrification.

BEING HELPFUL TO OTHERS

Clearly, a dimension of our role in ministry is not only to manage change ourselves but also to help others address this reality with more ease. Persons who are not managing change are fearful. Their anxiety must be articulated and explored in an atmosphere of safety, one in which the ground has stopped moving for a minute or so. This is an important and critical factor in working with persons who are devastated by massive change. Also, it is important that the *positive* aspects of the change at hand are verbalized and explored. Assisting them by asking catalytic questions is an important function.

Often, these persons feel caught by the massive cultural, ecclesiastical, and ministerial demands that weigh heavily on them, and they feel inadequate, overwhelmed, and out of control when confronted with the need to make yet another change. Assisting the person in assuming as much control as possible in decision making that may affect his or her life is crucial. The more control that is taken out of a person's hands at this time, the more panic-stricken the individual is likely to become.

The greatest service we can render to one another in our high-tech world is the support of human concern and compassionate response. It is in that atmosphere that change, transformation, and conversion can occur. When we are able to articulate our perceptions, our fears, and our hopes to one another, we give each other the courage to completely rethink what it is that we are doing. Perhaps we will dare, with each other, to rethink and redefine what we are about as ministers in the church of the third millenium, and unlike the dinosaurs, we won't just stand and wait.

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Sibling Relationships Affect Community

Michael J. Garanzini, S.J.

In the closing scene of the film *True Confessions*, Robert DeNiro, playing a monsignor whose career has been dramatically cut short by a scandal rocking the archdiocese, tells his brother, a police officer played by Robert Duvall, "You were my salvation. . . . I thought I was something I'm not." This true confession is the culmination of a reconciliation scene at the cemetery where the monsignor will some day be buried. A ruptured relationship is healed at the close of a career—late, but not too late; for the memories, questions, expectations, and hurts associated with sibling relationships end only with death. Our identities, our values, even our perceptions of who we are and what relationships are all about are often inextricably bound up with our attitudes toward our brothers and sisters.

In another recent movie, Woody Allen's *Interiors*, the powerful story of three sisters who must come to grips with their mother's death and their father's new life poignantly illustrates the painful renegotiation of relationships that follows the death of a parent—a process that in this case affects husbands and careers as well. The death of a parent is but one experience (though a crucial one) that siblings share and that powerfully affects them and their relationships with others. In this film, each sister, in her own way, replays the memories and images of growing up in a household with strict codes for familial interaction. These experiences are to some extent shared by all of the sisters, but they take on a unique personal character for each one, because of the special slant she brings to them.

The sibling bond is an intricate and ambiguous relationship. Grief, joy, and anger are first experienced in the family, as are the subtler, more complex emotions of jealousy, envy, resentment, and pride, which are often more difficult to understand or control. The sibling relationship can be a bond that unites people in affection, an obligation that joins them through a sense of duty, or a system of interconnected ties of various sorts. It can be close, distant, or anywhere in between. Moreover, sibling relationships are not fixed: they may be different at different times and in changing circumstances.

I believe that the same is true of our life in community. The reflections in this article are based more on a hunch than on firm data. My hunch is that there is a similarity between the sibling bond and the bond we feel in communal religious life, and that consequently, by studying this relationship, we can better understand the ways in which we approach or attach ourselves to others in religious community.

Moreover, the arts of forming people for community life and of providing spiritual direction for members of religious communities might benefit from a deeper understanding of the sibling bond. In other words, we in religious communities, who call one another "brother" or "sister," might profit

Scapegoats provide the community with excuses for failure or disappointment and help keep the issue of responsibility at bay

considerably by reflecting on our primary experiences with brothers and sisters.

SIBLING DYNAMIC IMPORTANT

Only recently have child and family therapists been trained to pay attention to the "sibling issue." Assessing the content and background of sibling relationships and the individual's reaction to them can be invaluable for understanding a person's past and evaluating his or her resources for dealing with problems. For some time now, family systems theory has impressed upon the helping professions the importance of birth order in families, the fluid and open nature of a child's roles and identities within a normal family, the process of scapegoating, fusing of identities, excessive dependencies in unhealthy family systems, and similar issues. In addition, family systems theory has shed light on the struggle for a separate identity that is carried on by every member of a family constellation. A specific focus on the sibling dynamic and its impact on the family, including its influence on identity formation, has forced us to ask new questions and reexamine old beliefs about the importance of relationships with brothers and sisters, which has often been underestimated in the past.

There are at least four major questions that we should ask if we wish to understand the relationship between an individual approaching adulthood and his or her siblings. As can be seen from the two columns below, the same questions, with slight modifications, can also be used to assess an individual's relationship with others in a religious community.

Family Life	*Community Life*
1. How do parents arrange or fail to arrange their children's relationships?	1. How do the structures and authorities within a community arrange or fail to arrange our life in common?
2. How do siblings themselves affect one another outside of the context of their parents' influence?	2. How do community members affect one another outside of the context of structures and authority?
3. How do biologic changes, such as illness or adolescence, or social changes, such as marriage or economic hardship, affect the bonding in a family?	3. How do age, maturation, and social changes and conditions affect community life?
4. How do larger contexts (ethnic background, social class, religious beliefs, and economic circumstances) affect siblings' experience of each other?	4. How do the larger contexts (ecclesial, apostolic, ethnic, social, geographic, etc.) affect our dealings with one another in community?

Those familiar with spiritual direction or counseling of men and women religious will recognize that dynamics that are the common stock of family life replay themselves in religious community. Such issues as scapegoating, complementarity, competition, and "frozen images" are often dealt with in the counseling setting. These are sibling issues first and foremost, and it is important for us to understand how they are carried over into community life.

Scapegoating. It is often the case in families that scapegoat a child that the scapegoat has emotional difficulties, physical abnormalities, or unusual traits that lead him or her to seek affection and gratification elsewhere. Such a child becomes the object of jokes and derision and is blamed for all of the family's misfortune or negligence. The scapegoat provides the family with the opportunity to deny its own responsibility or culpability and to project the negative qualities that it cannot face onto the disappointing, disturbed person. Such is the function of scapegoats in community life as well.

Difficulties in the apostolate, for example, may be blamed on "inefficient" administrators. A breakdown in community camaraderie may be seen as the fault of the younger or the older community members. An individual who is experiencing emotional difficulties is often a target for this need to find a scapegoat. Administrators or superiors whose duties take them away from the life of the community are particularly vulnerable; they can easily become the focal point for the group's frustrations and anxieties. As in the family, scapegoats provide the community with excuses for personal and collective failure or disappointment and help keep the issue of communal and individual responsibility at bay.

Competition. It is natural and healthy for children to attempt to win the esteem and affection of their parents. When that esteem and that affection are in short supply, siblings will see each other as rivals for what little attention is available. In the best of circumstances, competition sharpens skills, refines abilities, and encourages a healthy appraisal of one's shortcomings and deficiencies. In the worst of circumstances, competition leads to mistrust, resentment, and envy. Although it is unfortunate, some degree of disappointment is

THREE DEGREES OF RELATIONSHIP WITH SIBLINGS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

VITAL	CLINGING	DISTANT
• mutually enriching	• excessive dependence	• no close bond
• generous cooperation	• need for uniformity	• extreme independence
• differences enjoyed and learned from	• lacking in sense of self	• rare participation in group
• liberating and stimulating	• too much idealizing	• resulting from fear, disappointments, or resentment

normal; it cannot be avoided entirely. But if disappointments, resentments and envy remain unresolved because they are not recognized and examined, they can warp the relationships a child develops with other children. Unhealthy competitive traits are carried into adult life, where they can make all competitive situations tense, anxious, and agonizing. They can also lead to either a refusal to seek the esteem of others or an excessive need for and dependency on their esteem. The consequences for life in community and in the apostolate can be serious for the individual as well as for the group.

All of us have felt the sting of losing out in competitive activities organized by well-meaning superiors, teachers, and others who were trying to extract the best from each member of the group. We have also at times found ourselves in special need of attention and interest, noticed it was in short supply, and so set out to win it by excelling. This is natural and, to a point, healthy. The real difficulty arises when competitiveness begins to characterize our dealings with one another and imperceptibly to color even the most routine activi-

ties. There are communities, for example, where cooking the best meal or preparing the best liturgy is a way of increasing or maintaining status.

Complementarity. When working with parents, one often hears that one child is the "brain" of the family or that another is the "athlete." Parents acknowledge that one child prefers to operate in one manner, while another has a completely different style. Children naturally seek to distinguish and define themselves by developing interests and talents in ways that complement those of others. Although complementarity is sometimes simply an escape from the world of competition, it is often a healthy way of drawing on personal resources that might be ignored otherwise. The art of developing one's abilities and interests so as to help round out the repertoire of talents within the group is a skill first learned in the family.

In community life, a healthy complementarity creates diversity and allows for group cohesion through a celebration of differences. Unhealthy complementarity may be expressed through excessive individualism—a refusal to cooperate with others, to perform certain jobs, or to develop tal-

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ents that complement those of others. Often excessively individualistic persons are so concerned with protecting their own separateness and distinctiveness that they can only work on projects or apostolates that are not open to cooperative endeavor.

"Frozen Images." These are the tags that we pin on one another as shorthand descriptions that sum up a person's qualities or characteristics; "the monsignor," "the little genius," and "mother superior" are examples. A person may acquire these labels early in religious life and never be able to escape them.

It is often emphasized today that people change and grow throughout their lives, sometimes in dramatic ways. Yet families of all kinds can unconsciously shackle an individual's development with images that only partially describe his or her abilities and worth. Often such images reflect the family's needs more accurately than they do the needs of the person being described. For example, in a family where a child has died, the need to idealize the young person will often result in a not completely accurate description of his or her traits and qualities. The memories that are selected and recounted are those that present the child in the most favorable light possible.

Frozen images may be used to denigrate as well as to idealize. An individual within a family may be stigmatized as a "trouble-maker" or a "weakling." Tags like these often reflect anxiety within the group and fear of failure or difference. The person whose image has been frozen in such an unfavorable light must carry the burden of being forever so characterized within that family or group. For example, a seminarian who experienced a difficult adjustment period and expressed some rebelliousness may find it difficult or even impossible later in life to shake off his reputation as a "rebel."

Tags given in jest or in brotherly or sisterly affection may at one time serve to bind a group; but years later, the static character of such labels may have the opposite effect, excluding someone from a group by preserving a frozen picture of who he or she was in the past.

When frozen images are based on misunderstandings or on negative qualities, their effect can be devastating for both the individual who cannot escape them and the group that must live with them. In family life, such misunderstandings and negative images are usually the product of a chaotic and unhappy home. They bring certainty and security, in that they allow family members to predict one another's behavior and plan the appropriate responses, but they often burden the family with pain, anxiety, and perpetual disappointment.

Although most of us have experienced these dynamics in our childhood, their effects can be difficult to detect in our adult lives. Scapegoating can be unconscious as well as conscious. Competition can be healthy or unhealthy. Complementarity within a community or apostolate can be productive or unproductive. Frozen images can be positive badges of identity or fixed misunderstandings that rob an individual of dignity and the chance to grow. The presence of each of these dynamics in both healthy and unhealthy families indicates that each will be present to some degree in every religious family as well. They are only dangerous and unhealthy when they begin to destroy freedom and responsibility within the group. By examining the way these dynamics functioned in our own family histories, we might be able at least to understand what we expect of them and to what extent we tolerate them in our present family life. But tolerance in this instance is not virtue. Our belief that some things are "normal" when brothers and sisters get together may blind us to the truth and make us insensitive to the pain of others.

FIVE SALIENT PRINCIPLES

Drawing on the professional literature regarding sibling relationships and family systems theory, I have found five principles that I think are worth mentioning. I have alluded to them already, but they deserve a closer look.

1. *"Sibling issues" are not restricted to childhood; they reemerge in adult life.* Although our parents are psychologically more important to us, our sibling relationships require constant and frequent renegotiation, since they are lifelong. Siblings, along with parents, are the only people whom we live with without having *chosen* to do so. Although the intensity of the sibling dynamic tends to fade in adolescence as individuals begin to acquire a sense of power, it reemerges at about the time they leave home. Brothers and sisters can become very important to one another in early adulthood. This is indirectly borne out by the recent discovery that approximately 42% of divorced persons live with a sibling for some time after the divorce. Further evidence is that 94% of the adult population claims to be in regular contact with siblings—a remark-

ably high percentage, considering the highly mobile nature of the society in which we live.

Thus most young adults are working out identity issues (e.g., who is smarter? who is more of a burden to parents? who is easier to get along with?) at about the time they leave home. The issues then reappear when the young adult creates a new family. Those who enter religious life in early adulthood may need to work out these issues within the context of their new community life. The potential problems posed by competition, complementarity, and the tags that are given in jest or in frustration should be openly and honestly examined. This is especially important during the early stages of formation in community life, when sibling issues are bound to reemerge.

2. *The norms governing the sibling system are ambiguous and diffuse.* Even in the healthiest of families, there is bound to be some fuzziness about how siblings should relate to each other. The parental ethic for raising children is really a combination of two different ethics resulting from two separate upbringings. This combination is unique in every two-parent household. Parents' own sibling history inevitably influences what they expect, encourage, tolerate, and forbid in the families they create.

Some parents, for example, become extremely nervous when brothers and sisters quarrel; or they may tolerate brothers fighting among themselves but nonetheless feel that a brother and a sister should never fight. Some are disturbed by all fighting, whereas others are not bothered by squabbling and in fact count it as "good experience"—until it upsets those who are not involved or becomes potentially harmful. Family "rules" may be very difficult to decipher until parents have worked out their own separate sets of expectations.

In religious life, it is important to recognize that because of the varied life histories of the members, many different sets of expectations about ideal or intolerable behavior are operating within the community. Consequently, we need to make these expectations conscious and explicit. Superiors of houses of formation have a special responsibility to see that this is done. In addition, discussion of how the rules of conduct governed the home life of community members before they entered religious life could contribute a great deal toward avoiding misunderstandings.

3. *Because of the emotional bonds that are present, communication between siblings can be extremely difficult.* First of all, the language we use in discussing the sibling system is inadequate. The subtler, more complex emotions mentioned earlier (resentment, envy, jealousy, pride) are not easy to talk about, especially when our emotional state is clouded by more than one of them at the same time. Pride, hurt, envy, and admiration can well up simultaneously when people begin to speak about their memories of those who shared important life experiences with them.

Those who enter religious life in early adulthood may need to work out identity issues within the context of their new community life

The reason why this is so may be that most parents find it difficult to translate into words the many feelings they experience in raising their children. Usually they resort to intellectualizing or imperative sentences or commands to cover up their own confusion and the intensity of their emotions. They may say, for example, "I'm too upset with you to discuss the matter," or "I'm punishing you because you broke it," thus saving themselves from having to explain the disappointment, anger, and frustration that grow out of pride and love. Popular English literature is full of descriptions of siblings who turn to one another for solace and compassion when their relationships with their parents are shot through with fear, anger, and misunderstanding. This dependence can further complicate the sibling bond, making it more difficult, even impossible, to describe.

4. *The psychological accessibility of siblings to each other (which takes different forms depending on relative age and maturational levels) has a significant effect on how they learn to handle interpersonal problems.* An older sister can be a comfort because of the wisdom, detachment, and care she demonstrates in her treatment of a younger brother or sister. Her availability when the mother is too busy raising others or working can help her siblings to learn to cope with life situations. A sibling of about the same age can be a source of support and hopefulness in another way: the two children can share each other's pleasurable experiences and difficult moments.

Differences in age can hinder accessibility as well. A girl who has begun dating and is no longer available to her younger sister, a boy who has become too absorbed with his friends to pay attention to his younger brother, or an infant who steals the precious and limited attention of parents can produce hurt and resentment in siblings that is carried all the way into their adulthood.

On the other hand, siblings at different levels of

> **The sibling relationship is a laboratory where social, emotional, and cognitive lessons are first learned**

maturity who react to common experiences (e.g., constant criticism from an overworked, irritable, and impatient father; neglect by a self-absorbed, hypochondriacal mother) often exert a strong formative influence on one another's personality development.

Later, in community life, changes in apostolate, governance, or life-style affect us all quite differently. Our viewpoints depend on our age, level of maturity, temperament, and needs. As in childhood, we often find it difficult to express our needs and frustrations appropriately. This is especially true when we interact with the people we live with: our religious family.

5. *The sibling relationship is a laboratory where social, emotional, and cognitive lessons are first learned.* It is often the case that interchange with a brother or sister makes one's own uniqueness evident. By comparing themselves with one another, noting differences along with similarities, children assess their own responses and feelings, abilities and worth. They can grow close to one another through play, work, and intimate interactions, since among siblings there is usually minimal rejection and embarrassment. The safeness of the family bond makes it easier to experiment with concepts, feelings, and actions. Siblings cannot easily reject one another just because of a mistake or an indiscretion: they are generally compelled to learn from their mistakes, to undergo change, and to become emotionally involved with one another.

Religious vows and promises help to create a situation in which adults who share no legal or blood ties can continue this familial interaction. Community life is at its best when there exists among the members such a strong sense of being bound to one another that turning one's back on a difficult person or problem is simply not acceptable. Sharing life in community presents to all of us a steady stream of opportunities and challenges to continue maturing throughout our lives.

SIBLINGS AND SEXUALITY

One of the most difficult issues in the sibling dynamic is sexuality. It is mentioned indirectly in the psychological literature and in the literary recounting of sibling relationships, but seldom is it treated expressly. There are, however, several recent movies and novels, such as John Irving's *The Hotel New Hampshire*, that discuss the matter in a remarkably open manner.

That parents exert the primary influence on the formation of their children's sexual identity has been argued by Freudians and neo-Freudians so strongly and for so long that most people accept their view unquestioningly. Yet some behavioral scientists, especially the social learning theorists, have maintained that it is the family as a system of interdependent individuals that plays the primary role in sexual identity formation. Furthermore, they point out that peers and the general culture are also extremely important social influences.

No one would deny the part the social environment plays in shaping attitudes and beliefs. Still, siblings are in a position to have an especially powerful impact on several crucial aspects of psychosexual development. For example, they can be instrumental in determining (1) attitudes toward the opposite sex; (2) beliefs about what constitutes femininity and masculinity; and (3) feelings about early sexual experiences. Moreover, a same-sex sibling can be an important reference point for the consolidation of one's sexual identity, particularly during adolescence.

Brothers and sisters can influence their siblings' sense of security or insecurity about their sexuality and also how they learn to express their sexual feelings. Siblings, in other words, can affect how an individual completes his or her sexual unfolding, since sexual modeling plays a major role in the sibling relationship.

APPLICATION TO COMMUNITY

Individuals enter religious life with a history of experiences and a sexual identity and style that color their expectations about how their new lifestyle will foster or arrest their psychosexual development. Understanding these personal histories and becoming aware of these influences can aid the process of mature growth within the community.

For many religious, the consolidation of their sexual identity takes place only after they have entered a community; in such cases, the new religious family plays a significant role in the process. To what extent they complete the unfinished business of discovering their sexual identity and develop an appropriate and healthy way of expressing their sexuality within religious community life will depend largely on fellow religious—on peers even more than on directors, counselors, and superiors.

OTHERS CAN HELP

Awareness of the patterns forged in early relationships with siblings can be useful in understanding one's own relationships in community. Counselors and spiritual directors can help by exploring with their counselees the issues I mentioned earlier—especially by making a point of trying to detect the tags, or frozen images, that these persons are carrying through life.

Rivalries and jealousies may also be carried over from sibling relationships. Attachments and dependencies work in the same way: they can be unwittingly transported into the community, unrecognized by all but the most self-aware religious. Counseling can be of great value in helping community members to recognize these behavioral patterns.

Secrets of all kinds are brought from family life into the religious family, burdening the persons who keep them with guilt or shame. Often these persons discover that the painful emotions cannot be escaped by immersing themselves in religious life. Guilt and shame can be debilitating for those who attempt to ignore them. Therapist Milton Erikson advocates the acting out of forgiving rituals that can help heal the guilt incurred as a result of family tragedies, mistakes, and injuries. For example, he and his counselee may literally bury those injuries and hurts in a bottle or break and shatter glass to express the release of guilt and encourage the experience of relief.

Spiritual directors and counselors would do well to explore their own sibling history and the expectations that grew from that history. It is natural to assume that siblings are rivals, as Freud stressed, if one's own sibling relationships have been rivalrous. It is impossible to deal successfully with the resistance counselees exhibit when discussing painful issues in their family life if one's own beliefs and resistances are not recognized and faced squarely.

I have found that a serious review of sibling history helps many people, especially young adults, to see a wide variety of issues in perspective. Since for most of us sibling relationships are the closest and oldest ones we have, they are a rich resource for self-understanding. There is no better analogy to suggest the work needed to build strong, supportive communities than the personal experience of family life. Family history, and especially the sibling relationships within it, can guide the individual in determining what to avoid and what to strive for while living under one roof with religious brothers or sisters day after day.

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Personality Types in Spiritual Development

Elaine M. Prevallet, S.L.

The Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung thought that he perceived two distinct attitudes with which persons relate to the world. He named them *extravert* and *introvert* and spoke of them as "personality types." He regarded these as inborn, natural to a person, the way a person naturally prefers to be, the way a person is most comfortable behaving. Though one may be by preference extravert or introvert, Jung thought that one needed to seek to balance or complement one's preferred way. One should, then, work to develop the skills of the other type as well.

Extraverts are characterized by interest in external things, objects, events, people. Their energy tends to flow out toward them. They need others; their batteries are charged by being engaged with others; they like groups, parties, working together. They tend to work out their ideas in interaction with others; they will often find out what they think only when they hear themselves say it. They depend upon this interaction with others, with their environment, and are nourished by it. They may be frightened—or at least not very comfortable—in solitary situations, and may become very lonely there.

Introverts, on the other hand, are characterized by interest in internal things. Their batteries are charged by solitude. They often have a sense of space; that is to say, they need private places in the mind and in the outer world, and have an inner sense of the relationship between inner and outer spaces. They will be happiest working quietly alone or perhaps with some other trusted colleague; they are more at home reflecting than acting. They will feel loneliest in a crowd and are more comfortable in one-to-one relationships than in groups. They are likely to have a few intimate relationships rather than many and need to have established trust before they will venture to say what they think or feel.

JESUS PROVIDES MODEL

It seems safe to say that the Jesus of the Gospels can be looked to as a model by either extravert or introvert. The extravert might prefer to view Jesus as a man of action, an example of one who sees needs and moves to meet them, a liberator whose words and deeds might be studied for inspiration and motivation. Jesus might be found primarily as a presence in others, and the Matthean saying "As long as you did it to one of the least of these . . ." would serve to illuminate the extravert's life and actions. The introvert, on the other hand, might tend to view Jesus as a man of insight, who saw through to the deepest levels of the laws and values of life; a man totally united *from within* with God; a man instructed *from within* by the Father; a man for whom solitary times of communing with God were integral and essential. To the introvert, it is not so much what Jesus did but "where he comes from" that is inspiring.

Jesus himself must have been so whole that he could reveal himself as both introvert and extravert. This integration seems to be reflected in the collected Gospels: in John, Jesus is seen from within (within John and within Jesus) as the Life, the Light, the Love of God manifest; in Mark, Jesus is seen as a man of action, urgent about spreading the Good News of the Kingdom of God, healing,

teaching, exorcising demons. Both introverts and extraverts would find themselves nourished and challenged by this man, but perhaps in quite different ways.

What could this imply for the spiritual development of extraverts and introverts? Extraverts might instinctively be drawn into activities concerned with social justice: the kingdom of God will mean "the world," a world in which people can live in peace and justice. They will be drawn by their perception of need to give themselves on behalf of others. Involvement in causes will be important to them, and they will need others to sustain them, to energize them, to support them. They will need others to pray with them, and they might enjoy informal, "sharing" forms of prayer. They will be less likely to look for or to find God in times of private prayer: God will be revealed for them in the midst of activity, as present in others, as action in the world, in history. Many extraverts will relate positively to liturgy because it gives them something external to themselves to focus on, which they can then relate to their inner life and find meaning in. At Eucharist, the most important symbol and source of meaning might be the community, the Body of Christ, the People of God. They will need less time and space to withdraw and reflect on what is happening: they are nourished by being where the action is. Insights will come as they do what they're doing or in connection with others along the way. Since their energy naturally flows outward, their spiritual growth will be most influenced by service to others, by the sense of selflessness that comes from giving unstintingly of one's energy and time, by the sense of communion that comes from recognition of the presence of God in another. They may carry a deep, though sometimes inarticulate, sense of self and God. They need to guard against an attitude of self-righteousness, because of all their good actions.

MINISTRY CAN EXHAUST

Introverts, on the other hand, will place more value on the inner life: the quality of what one does, as opposed to simply doing something; the motive, the kind of energy it involves. Prayer, purification of motive, self-examination, a sense of inner prompting will be deemed essential. Where an extravert would move right in to meet a perceived need, the introvert will hesitate, weigh, wait to be sure of the congruent, sensitive action. Introverts will always need withdrawal time to recharge their batteries, and they are comfortable with—indeed find essential—space and time for private meditation or just for staring into space. Insights for them will come through reflecting, reading, pondering their experience. Prayer with others may be less important and even difficult if it demands personal sharing in other than an intimate, trusted group of friends; they may be more comfortable

We can grow by having to do what is not our preference, so long as it does not violate us

with a formal arrangement like the Divine Office, which protects their privacy. At Eucharist they will perhaps find the crowd a distraction to their private sense of relating to the symbols—the symbols of bread and wine or the symbol of the community. They have a sense of the richness of the kingdom of God *within* and will be happiest when they have adequate time and space to relate to the God within, to be in touch with their own inner resources. They will be easily drained by pressure to work for the kingdom of God in the outer world. They need to guard against a complacency that allows them to remain too peaceably in their own little world without moving to "incarnate their word," to connect it with the outer world. Kabir, in one of his poems, speaks of a "spiritual athlete" who "sits inside a shrine room all day, / so that the Guest has to go outdoors and praise the rocks." That is the difficulty for the introvert.

BALANCE IS DESIRABLE

These are only broad, general strokes, which need to be greatly differentiated as they are applied to individuals. They need to be further refined in terms of the personality functions delineated by Jung: intuition, thinking, feeling, sensation. We need to remember that the "type," although it is a natural, inborn tendency, is not a fixed and stable category. We change. And none of us—or at least very few—live with an either/or spirituality. Usually, we are involved in some way in both activity and prayer, we look both outward and inward, we need both time together and time alone. Ordinarily, we will be healthiest when we can do both with equal ease and when our lives express a judicious balance between them. It is also true that our lives are a variety of combinations, styles, and schedules dictated not necessarily by our preference—which is what the *type* indicates—but by our life situations. We can grow by having to do what is not our preference, so long as it does not violate us.

To illustrate that point: a young woman, highly introverted, was a novice in a religious community.

EXAMPLES OF SPIRITUAL INTERPRETATIONS OF RELIGIOUS VOW OR PROMISE

By an Extravert		By an Introvert
A Mandate to Share With Others	Poverty	A Trusting Dependence on God
Showing Love Through Availability	Celibacy	Loving God Through Solitude
Responding to the World's Needs Through Service	Obedience	Attending to God's Will or the Holy Spirit's Promptings

She was living in a house with seven sisters, though the space was actually designed for four. They were engaged, as part of their religious formation, in a great deal of group process work, being open with the group, sharing feelings, practicing much open-door hospitality. She rarely had time alone. As her second year wore on, she found herself growing more and more rebellious and resistant to so much "sharing" with the group. She grew angry and hostile, and she was not helped by having to express her feelings to them. She came to a time of retreat, needing to decide whether religious life was for her.

The woman's introvert needs were being violated. On the positive side, she had learned a great deal about herself psychologically: her own reactions, her needs, what she could and could not cope with. Spiritually, she had pushed deeper into the meaning of poverty of spirit and dependence on God. She had paid a painfully high price for this learning, but perhaps she could not have done it in any other way. To affirm this as growth was one thing; to allow herself to continue in such a situation was quite another. She needed to be clear with herself and with the community about what was and what was not profitable or even possible for her in fidelity to herself. It was an important turning point for her: she had matured and deepened, but now she needed to assume some responsibility for attending to her own needs as an introvert.

CLASH NOT UNUSUAL

In communities, there is sometimes a danger that one or the other personality type will tend to dominate. One group, for instance, may feel strongly that "the Christian way" demands complete hospitality, requiring open doors at all times. There may indeed be times and places when that is integral to living the gospel. Extraverts might then feel quite at home, and introverts would pray for the grace to cope. But one must be cautious about applying such a principle in an absolute manner or making a theological principle (the Christian way to do it) from a specific, situational judgment of need. Some will like to speak of "the gospel imperative of social involvement" as incumbent on all. Others will like to emphasize that Jesus always needed to go apart to pray, and will speak of "the gospel imperative of prayer." Each emphasis will reveal a type preference. Either, if taken as the absolute way, could violate the other. We are more often than we realize dealing with type preferences as we try to apply Christian principles to our lives. Some will respond to one, others to another. Unless we agree that different individuals will be challenged to grow spiritually in different ways, and strive to allow those differences to be honored, we will find ourselves in the midst of a deep polarization between "action" and "contemplation."

Another example of the difference between the two types is the way each relates to religious vows. The extravert might perceive celibacy primarily as a means of making himself or herself more available, of being loving with others; the introvert might understand it primarily in terms of being in solitude and as being a way of loving God. Extraverts might understand obedience in terms of the needs of the world, the call to serve; introverts might think first of obedience to God's will or their own inner prompting by the Spirit. Extraverts

might think first of simplicity or poverty as a mandate to share; introverts might think of it as poverty of spirit, trust, and dependence upon God. Both points of view are true; both are genuine expressions of the meaning of the vowed life. It is to be hoped that most religious will recognize the truth of both perspectives. Ideally, each will develop in the direction of integrating inner and outer: inner meanings must be incarnated, and outward behaviors must yield inner growth in personal depth. But the diverse articulations of the vows may not be equally meaningful for a given person. If, for instance, emphasis is upon vowed life in relation to the world or society, introverts will often find themselves strangely unaffected. It is all true, but it simply doesn't touch or inspire them. Extraverts, on the other hand, might find themselves feeling distanced and puzzled by articulations that emphasize individual or private inner meanings—the mystical, inner longing for God, or desire for union with Christ. Great care is needed not to exclude either one in the understanding of vowed life. If a community limits itself to one articulation, it blocks the expression of the other. It is important for each member to recognize the validity of both emphases and to discover those meanings that are true for himself or herself, without impugning anyone else's attitudes or convictions.

SOME NEED CHALLENGE

People will always need to be affirmed in the goodness and viability of their dominant approach, the preference that is natural to them. This is especially true of younger persons, who aren't yet sure of themselves or the life of God within them. It might also be true of older persons who have only recently become aware of their own type preference. Such persons will need modest challenge toward the opposite; but it is most important initially that they become comfortable being who they are, learning to follow the natural flow of their energy, learning to dedicate it to God, learning to use it in ways appropriate to their individual path.

At some point, certainly toward midlife, but perhaps sooner, one might watch for (though not *expect*) signals of change. For example, extraverts may experience "burnout" and start to feel a need for more quiet time. They will need to be helped with strong, even prodding, support, since it is so unfamiliar and scary to them. They will be helped by learning some definite disciplines to practice, so that they will find the time bearable at first. Introverts might experience an unfamiliar inner discomfort and will need to be prodded to move out to share some of their secret riches; to attempt some steady engagement with the outer world,

which for them is scary; to learn the value for their own spirituality of spending themselves on behalf of others. Each must be encouraged, at some point, to develop that which has not been given primary attention. So one must watch, in oneself or in others, both for the preference and for the balancing on the other side; one must sense in what proportion to support and encourage, and when to challenge. It is here that role models or guides, or best of all, a spiritually attuned friend and listener, are helpful.

Today there is available much of value from psychology that bears on spirituality. Personality inventories can give initial clues as to where one might look for that central leaning (or drawing of one's spirit) that will give major shape to one's spirituality. Psychology can also give information about where and how spiritual development may be blocked. We also have available from both Eastern and Western religious traditions scores of techniques to help with prayer, meditation, body-awareness, imaging, journal-keeping, etc. At a time when we have open before us a global horizon of injustice and need for change, and a sociological awareness of how we might act strategically and sensitively to bring it about, we are in a position where each individual not only can, but must, work consciously toward a balanced approach to his or her spiritual life.

It seems to me that at this time, and in the foreseeable future, the church as institution is less and less likely to be influential in forming a collective mentality or spirituality, that is, a spirituality that can apply to everyone alike. We will need a much deeper personal and conscious sense of the meaning of doctrines and symbols for each individual. We will need to cope with plurality of style and culture and to appreciate differences. We need to come to cherish the individual form that faith takes in the life of each person. We can learn to trust it, to appreciate it, to feel ourselves balanced and complemented by differences rather than threatened by them. We may learn to recognize and depend on these differences as the ecosystem, the balancing and complementing of energies in the Body of Christ. To appreciate extravert and introvert spiritualities in this fashion may contribute considerably toward that end.

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Growing in Christian Faith

Richard P. Vaughan, S.J., Ph. D.

When one thinks of faith, what usually comes to mind is a set of beliefs such as those in the Nicene Creed. This limited view of faith stems from the Council of Trent, which emphasized faith as the assent of the intellect to revealed truth rather than confidence in God's mercy, as held by Martin Luther. However, as John McKenzie maintained in *The Power and the Wisdom*, "The Council of Trent . . . never intended that its declaration should be taken as a complete and final exposition of the nature of faith; it is a theological axiom that the statements of the ecumenical councils are always to be read in the context of the controversies which elicit the statement."

Matthew's Gospel (8:5–13) tells how a centurion came to Jesus and asked that he cure his servant. When Jesus responded that he would come and cure him, the centurion replied that there was no need, since he believed that Jesus could cure the servant without going to his house, to which Jesus responded: "I tell you solemnly, nowhere in Israel have I found faith like this." Faith as used in this passage, and in numerous other passages in the Gospels, signifies belief in Jesus Christ and who he says he is. To believe in Jesus Christ means to accept him as Lord and Savior and to accept the message he taught. The core of this message is that he, Jesus, is the Son of God, sent by God the Father through the intervention of God the Holy Spirit.

Christian faith is an encounter with Jesus Christ, who meets the believer through his Spirit, while the believer meets Christ through the gift of faith, which allows the believer to know and accept Christ and the message Christ taught. It is an enduring state of the total person that involves knowledge, experience, trust, feelings and emotions, and commitment.

KNOWING CHRIST AND HIS MESSAGE

Knowledge is an essential part of faith. To believe in Jesus Christ is to know him in some fashion. Obviously, this knowing cannot be the same as the way I know my next door neighbor, since Jesus Christ no longer walks the paths of Galilee, as he did two thousand years ago. My knowledge of Jesus Christ is dependent on what he has said about himself, as found in the Scripture, the teaching of the Church, and the sharing Christian community.

There are two ways of knowing something: (1) by direct experience and (2) on the word of another. I know my next door neighbor because we have met over the back fence, whereas my knowledge of Margaret Thatcher is based on what others, especially the news broadcasters and writers, have told me. Because of natural faith, I accept what these others have said, and I form a view of her. Much of what we know is based on natural faith. We accept it because we trust the veracity of another.

When we were children, parents and religious teachers told us about God and the things of God. We found that we could gain their approval if we believed as they believed. There came a time, however, when natural faith gave way to divine faith, which most probably took place sometime during adolescence. We then believed in God, especially in

FACILITATING GROWTH IN FAITH

Prayerful Reflection on Scripture

Careful Reading of the Gospels

Reading Others' Reflections on Christ

Hearing Others Describe Their Faith

the person of Jesus Christ, because of personal conviction and free choice. This conviction was the outcome of divine grace, freely given and freely accepted. "You did not choose me; no, I chose you" (John 15:16). Faith is a gift; it is neither merited nor deserved. A personal acceptance of God's self-revelation through Jesus Christ is the basis of this belief. We believe because we are convinced that what God has revealed through the Scriptures is true and demands our adherence. The source of this belief is grace, a spiritual gift, which enlightens the mind and moves the will to acceptance.

Even though we have fundamentally the same faith, we each have a somewhat different way of looking at God. For one individual, God is an Almighty Spiritual Power; for another, he is the person of Jesus Christ; for still another, he is the feared Judge one is to face at the end of life. It is this way of viewing God that constitutes our image of God, which is the product of many past influences, such as parents and family members, religious educators, peers and friends, and finally, cultural factors. In addition to these, personality structure affects, to some extent, our view of God. The image of God found in the well-balanced person is usually quite different from that of the neurotic, plagued with fears, anxieties, and self-

doubts that spill over into the way he or she sees God. If we take into consideration God's infinite nature and the limitations of the human mind, different views should not surprise us. In comparing our knowledge of God in the present life with that in the next, St. Paul says: "What we see now is like the dim image in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. What I know now is only partial; then it will be complete, as complete as God's knowledge of me" (1 Corinthians 13:11–12). Thus, we now know God only indirectly and partially. Moreover, we tend to focus on what most impresses us. Much of what we know about God comes to us through Jesus Christ, as given in the Scriptures. "In the past, God spoke to our ancestors many times and in many ways through the prophets; in our time, he speaks through his Son" (Hebrews 1:1). How we view ourselves can determine our focus. We are more likely to see God as one who loves and cares about us if we have a good self-image. We simply assume that God sees us as we see ourselves, whereas the self-condemning person assumes that God is also condemning.

There are a number of ways we can facilitate growth in the knowledge of Jesus Christ and what he taught. First, there is the careful reading of the Gospels, which reflect the experiences of people

who either directly or indirectly knew Jesus Christ. A second way is prayerful reflection on key passages in the Gospels and Epistles, drawing personal meaning from each. Another is reading what others have to say about Jesus Christ and what he taught. And finally, some find faith sharing invaluable, because they have the opportunity to hear others describe their image of God and then to compare this with their own.

EXPERIENCE OF GOD

Paul wrote in his letter to the Galatians (2:20), "It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me." What Paul is saying is that he experiences the felt presence of Jesus Christ in his very person. A part of faith is this experiencing of God, especially in the person of Jesus Christ. In psychological terms, experiencing God means knowing him intuitively. Intuition is a kind of knowledge whereby one has a sudden insight into the essence of a thing without going through the usual reasoning process. It does not involve discursive reflection, mental images, or the use of words, but immediate apprehension and understanding.

God is the Creator and Sustainer of all that exists. He is omnipresent and works in everything. People who experience God intuitively are aware of his presence in all things. They find this presence within themselves, within others, and within the events of their life. Sometimes this experience is just below the level of consciousness, an almost unnoticed, pervasive awareness of God and his place in their daily lives; at other times it may be deeply felt and moving, like Abraham Maslow's "peak experience." That one experiences God's presence is a grace, a God-given gift, for which one should pray.

Awareness of the divine presence calls for control over one's consciousness. We cannot be aware of this presence if our minds are centered on pleasure or turned in on ourselves by worries, anxieties, and fears. There is need to prepare the psyche, emptying it of all thoughts and feelings that hinder the working of divine grace. Some have to search for this presence, at times successfully and at other times not; others experience it when they least expect it.

TRUST IS ESSENTIAL

Trust, which is the foundation of every human relationship, is another dimension of faith. If one has trust, relationships blossom; if one mistrusts, relationships wither or never develop. Just as trust is needed for human relationships, so it is essential for an encounter with Jesus Christ.

According to Erik Erikson, developing a sense of trust is the first task of every human being. Infants quickly learn whether mother is going to meet their basic needs with consistency. If they are fed regu-

Depending upon one's image of God, the experience of faith can evoke joy and consolation or fear and apprehension

larly when they are hungry and comforted when they are uncomfortable, and if this is all done in a loving manner, they soon come to realize that mother is dependable and reliable and therefore can be trusted. A person uses this sense of trust in all future relationships. True friends can be trusted to be present in some way when they are needed. They are people with whom one can feel safe and at ease. There is no reason to expect betrayal, rejection, or hurt.

When one begins to relate to Jesus Christ in a personal manner, which James Fowler says takes place in adolescence, this same sense of trust is the foundation of the relationship. Young people come to trust Jesus Christ because they find they can rely on him. He is a friend whom they can call upon and whom they know will answer their prayers. It is this sense of trust that allows faith to develop and that becomes a part of each faith experience during the whole of one's life. If the sense of trust is undermined, faith begins to waver.

FEELINGS FOLLOW CONVICTION

The Council of Trent emphasized intellectual assent to the neglect of affectivity. Feelings and emotions are deeply intertwined with faith. Every relationship has an emotional component, even if it is only the feeling of indifference. Usually, people have strong positive feelings, such as love and admiration, for those they feel close to. Since faith involves a relationship with God, especially in the person of Jesus Christ, it should not be surprising that feelings play an active role in this experience. The fuller the acceptance of Jesus Christ in faith, the stronger the feeling of love, since strong feelings usually follow from deep conviction.

Depending upon one's image of God, the experience of faith can evoke joy and consolation or fear and apprehension. The person who frequently sees manifestations of God's love in his or her life usually experiences feelings of love for God and

neighbor, whereas the one who focuses on God as Ultimate Judge reacts with fear and apprehension.

To grow in faith, we need to be aware of our feelings about God and to cultivate those that lead to fuller personal acceptance and love, while confronting those that alienate us from him, such as fear, guilt, and anger. Positive feelings can help faith development; negative ones can hinder it.

ACCEPTANCE IMPLIES COMMITMENT

Faith, as I have already said, is more than a set of revealed propositions dealing with God and the things of God, to which one gives an intellectual assent. Faith also calls for a personal acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and of the message he taught. The *personal* acceptance implies a commitment to Christ and the message. To be committed to something, such as world peace, means giving one's allegiance to this cause. It is possible to give an intellectual assent to the need for peace but have no commitment to it; the acceptance is not personal. The individual does not give his whole person to the cause. He or she merely acknowledges the need for peace in the world. Faith asks for a personal involvement, which means the giving of one's whole heart in addition to one's intellectual assent. When Scripture speaks of giving one's whole heart to something, it means the giving of one's whole self. This giving of the whole self in faith results in an allegiance and loyalty to Jesus Christ and what he taught. This allegiance and loyalty give rise to obedience, respect, and service. To grow in faith means to grow in allegiance and loyalty.

Growth in Christian faith, then, means

1. developing a fuller and deeper understanding of Jesus Christ—who he is and what he taught.
2. becoming more deeply convinced that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior, and that the message he taught is true.
3. experiencing the divine presence more frequently and more fully in one's daily life, becoming increasingly more aware of the part God is playing in our lives.
4. developing a greater trust in God's reliability, recognizing that he does and will care for each of us.
5. more frequently seeing manifestations of God's love and, as a consequence, becoming more fully convinced of this love.

6. becoming more fully committed to Jesus Christ and the message he taught, giving both greater allegiance and greater loyalty.

This growth in faith will inevitably manifest itself in greater devotion and service.

How does growth in faith come about?

1. Since faith is a gift of God and not merited, it can only grow through divine intervention. It is something for which we each should pray, as does the church.
2. Its growth is facilitated by reading the Scriptures and meditating on key passages, making them personally meaningful.
3. Faith may be increased through participation in the Sacraments, attendance at Mass, and prayer.
4. It may grow by sharing what we believe with others and listening to what others believe.
5. It may grow by striving to increase our awareness of God's presence in ourselves, in others, and in the events of our lives.
6. It grows through manifesting love for others in deeds and words, as we are called to do by the great commandment.

In summary, Christian faith is an encounter with Jesus Christ that calls for a personal acceptance of Christ as Lord and Savior and acceptance of the message he taught. This personal acceptance involves not only an intellectual assent but also a commitment to the person of Jesus Christ and to what he taught. A part of faith is experiencing God's presence in our daily lives. Since faith is a personal relationship, it evokes feelings and emotions such as love, reverence, and awe. Growth in faith means increasing the personal acceptance and commitment, becoming more fully aware of God's presence, and developing stronger emotional ties through deepening convictions.

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ON EASTER SCHOOLDAY

James Torrens, S.J.

I

on Easter schoolday
Magdalen attached
to a rabbi's feet,
her hold on the truth
like wrestler Jacob's:
"i will not let you go"

II

first followers
of the Lamb
inquired, "rabbi,
where do you dwell?"
come see

III

"come see who told me
my lost deeds"
woman ran calling
from Jacob's well
when from the stony deep
he drew her
up into light

IV

"no, do not clutch"
he instructs the latest
learner by heart
"I must yet ascend"

into his own dazzle
where he attracts
beyond all knowing

P aolo Freire, the Brazilian educator who has fired the literacy movement with a spirit of social critique, stayed recently on our campus. Conversing, he gives evidence of a voracious mind, intent on linking the sciences—astronomy, physics, computer science—with epistemology and theology. "I try to be a man of my time," he said. Having packed up books for him to send home, I knew the broad spectrum of titles that this implied. My comment on such a holistic approach to learning was, "It seems an exhausting program." He responded, "The way for educators never to get tired is to be tired."

Freire had to explain his paradox. You can spare yourself the exertion of wide reading, discussion, heavy questions only at the cost of boredom and a kind of fatalism about the surrounding world, or in a phrase, at the cost of "existential fatigue." His revolutionary outlook thus amounts to a way of seeing that turns things not so much upside down as right side up. When asked what view he took of the refined technologies of Silicon Valley, where he then found himself, he professed admiration for them; he added, however, "I have to ask, in favor of whom and of what are they? Against whom or what are they being directed?" Probing values, maintaining salutary distance even when exercising an intelligent presence, keeping an eye out to world needs and hopes—this constitutes his approach.

People readily admit how crucial it is to be a learner in an era that swamps us with data. Readers have been excited by John Naisbitt's *Megatrends* precisely for its string of insights into the Age of Information that has come upon us. *Megatrends*, however, also raises serious questions, some of them by its very format; for Naisbitt pays out his findings in bits, or bites. Each page or two is followed by a bold-faced sentence or summary, which makes the book almost a catechesis for readers who might have trouble following. He also assumes that reality bunches. The book shows a populist instinct, expresses enthusiasm for small-group initiative. Even when discussing the world economy and "global interdependence" it remains pessimistic about large-scale unification of peoples or unity of purpose. And it leaves unexplored the questionable value of many trends.

We appreciate Naisbitt or anyone giving form to the immense field of our times. But we welcome even more those who, while attentive to the detail, pose resolute questions, point out hazards, do not flinch from utopian planning. Information, even in a generalized state, is not self-digesting. The science classrooms, one would think, have more than enough to do initiating students into the mysteries of chemistry, life science, engineering. But Freire would also put to these students, and their teachers, the challenge of critical learning: How can this be turned to the benefit of the many? How can human perspective be maintained?

Ira Shor, who worked with Open Admissions students in the junior-college system of New York City

in the 1970s, has incorporated Freire's approach into his own emphasis on "dialogic process" and "systemic reasoning" in *Critical Teaching and Everyday Life* (South End Press, Boston, 1980). Shor, whose model is the "liberatory classroom," calls for the teacher to refrain from "furiously filling the air with words," in the interest of helping students learn to systematize, give a new form to, their speeded up, chaotic, and oppressive daily experience. The teacher is to be catalyst in "the authentic community of learners." His or her role shifts continually from peer discussant, to facilitator of projects, to resource expert, to advocate for missing perspectives, to mediator, to occasional lecturer on special topics." Shor concludes, "This is a very demanding way to teach and to learn. You have to listen carefully all the time." To put it mildly!

Thus is the Herr Professor, chest bulging with titles and degrees, invited, in the melodramatic phrase of Freire, to "commit class suicide." He or she is not to stand on the privilege of class, on membership in the estate of Those in the Know Who Are Certified to Say. One may ask, of course, Why not, for goodness sake, after those untold years of study? The reasons for a different stance— any teacher's different stance at home, on the job, in the classroom—are several: the intricacy and constantly shifting fields of modern reality; the recognition of one's own inevitably small grasp upon larger and larger truth; a sense of teaching that means helping others onto their own feet along the way that the teacher too follows, the way to the True.

Long before modern science and its habit of revising itself, Jesus came out with his own strong reservation about human teachers: "Call no man rabbi." It derived, actually, from his observation of religious masters cultivating status and having others kowtow to them. He warned his own disciples, "You, however, must not allow yourselves to be called Rabbi, since you have only one Master, and you are all brothers. . . . Nor must you allow yourselves to be called teachers, for you have only one Teacher, the Christ" (Matthew 23:7–10).

This warning from Jesus rings somewhat strange, for the Jews then as now prized their religious teachers, regarding them with an incredible reverence, so that their sayings could burrow deep into the memory. "Let your house be a resting place for wise men; . . . drink in their words with thirst," the Jews were told in the *Pirke Aboth* (*The Sayings of the Fathers*). The advice is still good; none better. But addressing the knowers, those privileged to instruct, Jesus still had to warn them to respect the hiddenness of God—the core of things, which like the center of earth stays far out of sight.

Jesus said repeatedly in his own regard, "My teaching is not from myself; it comes from the one who sent me" (John 7:16). He phrased this elsewhere as follows: "The Son can do nothing of him-self, but only what he sees the Father doing" (John 5:19). Those listening then to the one whom the Eastern liturgies herald as "Wisdom" recognized in him something wildly new. He taught "as one having authority." His word reached far beyond that of mere human teachers, precisely by reason of this mysterious grounding.

The preaching of Jesus derived from his own method: observe and ponder. As he passed along his way, he questioned the form and implication of natural events; he probed human motives; he came to severe judgments about the status quo of Israel; he even wondered aloud, in his last agonizing moments, about his Father's apparent withdrawal. The future troubled him, hiding its face. Yet he had total confidence in the goodness of created things and in his Father. His thought was prayerful.

Jesus the Learner-Teacher, by his instructive Spirit sent forth upon the world, helps us fill out the perspective given us by our leading contemporaries. Such a one is Robert D. Marcus, provost of Rollins College, writing in *The Chronicle for Higher Education* (April 14, 1982) to fellow teachers of undergraduates about "the incompleteness of our answers, formulations, and theories," urging them to let students in not just to the dining room where knowledge appears neatly laid out, but to the kitchens of learning, where pupils may "see our false starts, the ambiguities and uncertainties, as we push from what we know to what we do not." Let them watch us modeling as learners, Marcus says.

The perspective of Freire goes beyond Marcus to urge, Let us not just act before them but come out of ourselves to engage them in a common and hopeful task, the realization of a dream, where the word "our" ceases to be loaded so heavily with "me" and becomes more pervaded with "you." Shor calls this aim, which he too puts before the teacher, a "transcendent fancy." For Freire it is our "project," our throwing forward of an image of our time-place that we hope to make real.

Adherence to Our Lord continually instructs us in this project and its link to the kingdom, in addition to the reverses to be ready for. Our faith mixes mystery and assurance, distance and presence; it makes us aware of tough resistances and plentiful resources; it speaks to the cosmic or oceanic sense and to the down-to-earth search for the will of God and our earnestness about comprehending detail. Through its own fine tuning of optimism and humbleness does our faith point us toward the goal described by St. Paul as "the fullness of God" (Ephesians 3:19). "He is the sea," Dante tells us in the *Paradiso*, "to which all creatures stream / whom he creates or nature brings to be" (Canto 3, 86–87).

Concerning Jesus as teacher I have drawn much from Joseph A. Grassi's The Teacher in the Primitive Church and the Teacher Today.

BOOK REVIEWS

Psychology's Sanction for Selfishness: The Error of Egoism in Theory and Therapy, by Michael A. Wallach and Lise Wallach. San Francisco: W. H. Freeman, 1983. 307 pp. $9.95.

"Should we be looking out for Number One?" asks the cover of this book and the title of the first chapter. The book gives the answer no, not primarily or exclusively, and its thesis is that much of clinical and academic psychology to the contrary, such an answer is not necessary. The book is written by two members of the Department of Psychology at Duke University. They remark that the notions expressed in their book have engendered lively controversy among their colleagues and students; one can believe it and expect similar reactions from those who read the book from a religious point of view.

The Wallachs see contemporary psychology supporting a theory of human nature in which selfishness and egoism are inevitable. Thus, they have concern for the "old values," which they exemplify by the French Resistance, Boy Scouts, or the Pennsylvania Amish, cited and contrasted with examples such as the movies of Woody Allen and the well-known strictures of Christopher Lasch (*The Culture of Narcissism,* 1978). Of more interest to readers of HUMAN DEVELOPMENT are the references to Paul Vitz's *Psychology as Religion: The Cult of Self-Worship* (1977), in which Vitz surveyed much of the same ground and came to the conclusion (quite in harmony with the more pessimistic strain of Protestant theology concerning fallen man) that all modern psychology is so tied up with the celebration of self that the only alternative is to move outside it.

The authors begin with a survey of Freud's beliefs about human motivation, seeing in his as-sumption and encouragement of egoism a legacy that has pervaded the work of his successors. Special attention is given to Harry Stack Sullivan, Karen Horney, and Erich Fromm, from among the psychiatrists, and to the founders of the American human potential movement, Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers, from among the psychologists. This concludes the survey of clinical psychology.

Their survey of academic psychology includes summaries of the social psychologists (H. H. Kelley and J. W. Thibaut: "What ultimately guides your social acts are their ultimate outcomes to yourself") and the social learning theorists (Albert Bandura: "All an individual can fundamentally care about are personal outcomes: what is outside ourselves can have little influence on us").

Moving on from their negative critique, the authors again raise their question, "Is egoism a necessary assumption of psychology?" and move toward their negative answer. They hypothesize that there is a likelihood that natural selection may have promoted the evolution of certain unlearned bases of concern for others, of some innate tendencies to be responsive to their outcomes as well as one's own. "Need does not seem to offer the only available basis for motivation, and the egoistic assumption appears to be wrong." They argue their position mainly by listing the benefits to be gained by working outward. Here the work of Allen E. Bergin, Karl Menninger, Viktor Frankl, Milton Erickson, and the Japanese psychiatrist Shoma Morita is summarized and offered as examples that such work is not only theoretically possible but practically beneficial.

The book concludes with a short chapter on the place of ethics. The authors draw much from the writings of John Rawls, and their method and conclusions are quite compatible with a careful formulation of the classic Christian theory of natural law.

What is the value of such a book? It is not an encyclopedia of psychology, yet it does give fairly pointed summaries of the working theories of many influential figures in the field, in a convenient, albeit somewhat arbitrary, framework that puts them in context and allows us, by a good bibliography, to track down further elaborations of their thought.

All of us working in the fields of psychiatry, psychology, pastoral counseling, and religious formation have used the insights of many of the figures studied and criticized in the book. Those of us working from a religious perspective have noted their strictures against religion as often going beyond the evidence and set them aside as dicta. Yet the appalling excesses of the extremists within the human potential movement and the havoc that has

been wrought on individuals, families, and society by unbridled "looking out for number one" make it mandatory on occasion to look back at the roots, assumptions, implications, and (perhaps unwarranted) consequences of our theoreticians. Learn, we must continually tell ourselves, but learn critically. Use, but use critically.

The book, then, is not for everyone, but if you are in the helping field or interested in its theoretical questions, you will find the book is inexpensive, convenient, and well written.

—**Jon J. O'Brien, S.J., D.O.**

The Viscott Method: A Revolutionary Program for Self-Analysis and Self-Understanding, by David Viscott, M.D. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984. 169 pp. $15.95.

David Viscott, a practicing psychiatrist in Los Angeles and a fairly well-known author and lecturer in his field, has published an intriguing workbook for what he describes as his "utterly unique method of self-understanding where you are your own therapist." Those with a fine sense for the language will bristle over the phrase "utterly unique." Some of the book's statements are little short of a parody of other self-help books; some statements (e.g., "People who are centered are free ... they owe nothing and want only what they deserve") appear in giddy contradiction to basic religious sentiments. Nonetheless, I think the book's method and organization may be of use and value to some readers.

The book is an adaptation for do-it-yourselfers of the method Viscott uses in office practice. Trained in a psychiatric residency that emphasized short-term psychotherapy, he has developed a program in which he ordinarily sees patients for four two-hour sessions, often months apart, with the patients doing a great deal of work on their own in between sessions.

The method combines spontaneous tape recording of responses to open-ended questions, careful listening and analysis of the tapes from several specified points of view, behavioral-modification-type diaries of emotional changes over a period of time, and "action boards" to help plan one's future.

Viscott's first goal is to help the reader bring into awareness formative experiences and deeply felt emotions, particularly negative ones. He sees all negative feelings from a quasi-biological point of view, as being derived from pain. He understands pain related to the future to be expressed as anxiety; pain in the present to be experienced as sadness resulting from hurt or loss; pain from the past

to manifest itself as anger. Anger not released outwardly is experienced inwardly as guilt; present hurt directed inward is experienced as depression. So far, familiar modifications of the analytic theory of emotions.

The task for someone using the method is to clarify the emotions and to spot the defenses (denial, excuses, and pretenses) that form, by definition, maladapative ways of dealing with life experiences. This is the task of the early tapes and their analysis. Once a more honest appraisal is obtained, changes can be planned through goal-oriented behavior. Viscott gives an elaborate system of defining goals and pursuing them by means of an "action board," and of monitoring progress toward them over time.

The book concludes with a too-brief presentation of (secular) meditation and relaxation techniques and a glossary of his terms defined in an operational way (e.g., "Boredom: missing the thread of life, answered fleetingly by sex; solved by the act of creating and self-acceptance").

The book is written from a completely secular point of view. Little or no reference to religion is made. Although giving, gratitude, and love are advocated, their operational definitions make one pause. Giving is "expressing self-love," generosity is "the expression of feeling complete," and love is "caring about the feelings of another as if they were your own."

Can the book be useful? In a way, it would seem to be doomed to the fate of all self-help books: those who will read it will not need it; those who will need it will not read it. Worked from an exclusively secular point of view, it could develop a very selfish person. But it seems to me that it may be possible to read it from a religious point of view, seeking a clear understanding of one's self in order to have a clearer understanding of God's goodness and self-giving love, and in order to put the developed self at the disposal of God, under his grace.

It occurs to me that the book might be most useful to someone who has had some experience with therapy. It is difficult enough for us to be honest in collaboration with someone we have learned to trust; it is far more difficult for us to be honest with ourselves, or to achieve, alone, the insights we may painfully gain through the prodding of a skilled and trusted other.

I have also been wondering what it would be like for two good friends to go through the process in parallel, with mutual discussion, critique, and assessment. It would be an interesting venture that could enrich the friendship as well as the individuals.

The Viscott Method is a book that needs adaptation but that may be useful for spiritual directors or those who work developmentally with others to know about.

—**Jon J. O'Brien, S.J., D.O.**

Growing Pains in Ministry, by Sean D. Sammon, F.M.S. Whitinsville, Massachusetts: Affirmation Books, 1983. 240 pp. $8.00.

The youthful picture of Brother Sean Sammon on the back cover of this book belies the wisdom that will be found within. Much has been packed into its two hundred and forty pages.

The opening chapters are in some ways the most important and the most interesting. Here, in broad sweep, Sammon presents his concept of transition, personal, ecclesial, and national. By applying his basic theory of transition first to the church in this postconciliar era (and reminding us that we are far from completing this transition) and next to American society today, he enables us to place our personal transitions in context. This is most helpful, making the vicissitudes of our transitions more meaningful and more bearable.

Sammon proceeds to apply his theory of transition to life's journey, and particularly to the journey of the ecclesial minister—priest, brother, or sister. One begins to understand that most of life is going to be spent in transitions. Such a realization gives some sense and meaning to the recurring confusion that comes into our lives. So much of life is spent in in-between periods that lie between the death of the old and the birth of the new. Understanding this can be helpful to us in accepting our sense of loss and grief. They are not only appropriate but are healthful parts of the transition. Understanding this can also be helpful in throwing a glow of hope on the confusing periods of exploration: we know we can look forward to a new beginning.

Sammon's book is particularly helpful because his exposition is very clear and simple, almost monotonously repetitive in its form, but lightened and enlightened by many clarifying and interesting examples. You sense you are hearing a man of experience who knows what he is talking about.

The only section I found disappointing was the one on celibacy. The chapter is too concise and lacks the depth and feeling that this central concern evokes in the lives of most religious. I wondered if the author was saving his material for another book. The following section, on spirituality and the evolution of faith, I found especially good. It rings true. His presentation of the topic of fidelity is nuanced, and rightly so. To maintain a balance between human and psychological freedom and the exigencies of faith is difficult. To know that apparent infidelity is in truth fidelity calls for a very careful discernment. The final chapter, on burnout, is sharp, clear, and filled with practical advice that might obviate much unnecessary suffering.

The book as a whole poses many challenging questions and contains much practical advice. The religious life experience survey and the self-test for "Type A" personality (both included at the end of the volume), taken seriously, might literally save lives.

This is a book worth knowing about and having on hand. It could be used for a fruitful retreat if one tried to respond honestly to the questions it is constantly asking. "What is your dream?" "On whom or what is your heart set?" "What are your commitments?" "Can one say forever?" Its warnings of the signs and stages of burnout could also be made part of the examen. It is a book that it would be helpful to have available as one moves into new transitions, a helpful key to what is going on and a hopeful reminder of better things to come.

I would recommend the book to everyone who counsels priests and religious, to the libraries of religious houses and individuals, and to retreat houses. I think it might also be fruitfully incorporated into novitiate programs.

—**M. Basil Pennington, O.C.S.O.**

4

A Threat to Christian Communities

Angry People Acting Passive-Aggressively

ROBERT J. WICKS, Psy.D.

Passive aggressiveness is a psychological cancer capable of slowly destroying from within a group with the potential for growth. Unfortunately, Christian communities, instead of being immune to this problem, are often ideal environments for the development and nurturance of passive aggressiveness.

Worshipers and people in ministry, and the social unit within which they operate (i.e., church, religious community, Christian school), often consciously support a style of behavior emphasizing control, suppression, repression, denial of anger, and avoidance of conflict. As one might expect, such a psychological philosophy of living can easily lead to personal devastation, an apathetic community, or supposedly religious causes that are based on legalism or extremism and unconsciously deliver hostility instead of the Good News of the gospel.

When anger is not recognized and channeled constructively, in a religious person or community, a lack of growth and/or increase in personal and communal psychopathology is the expected outcome. Illustrations of this, unfortunately, are easy to uncover. The following are four obvious ones:

• The accommodating priest who gets along with everyone in the parish but develops an ulcer, hypertension, and/or problems with alcoholism or obesity in the process
• The "nice"—but insular and stagnant—Christian church or school that is so fearful of anger being experienced in its midst that it discourages and denies conflict in any form
• The Catholic religious who does everything by the letter of the law and devotes much energy to keeping himself or herself from breaking it and to ensuring that others don't venture out of its bounds as well
• The Christian activists (e.g., for peace, against abortion) who act with such a vengeance that their message defeats the purported Christian one they claim to be delivering to others by witnessing the truth

That such examples of Christians who are not in touch with their anger, much less aware of their ability and need to use it constructively, are abundant can be traced to the traditional misunderstandings that Christians have had with regard to anger.

CONFUSION ABOUT ANGER

Perfection as a goal can be inspirational. Yet, when it has as one of its tenets the elimination of anger as an emotion, it is a threatening, misguided norm for Christians to follow. Taking New Testament injunctions out of context is one of the key determinants of the confusion and distortion that lead Christians to want to avoid anger at all costs.

Jesus' admonition to "turn the other cheek" and the Apostle Paul's encouragement to "put off the old nature" have long been consciously and indi-

rectly employed as supports for the need to subdue one's anger. To interpret Christ and Paul in this way, however, is to assume that loving one's neighbor and reviewing/renewing one's life in Christ is tantamount to denying one's own God-given human nature—which includes emotions such as anger. Christians seeking such perfection may also make light of, or deny, Christ's own displays of anger at the injustices he saw. As Matthew Fox points out in his popular book on American spirituality, *On Becoming a Musical Mystical Bear*, such an outlook can lead to the removal of justified anger from the center of the Christian's prayer life, which in turn can make life in faith a compartmentalized, artificial one. Fox observes:

> Piety and social intransigence go to church regularly hand in hand. In this way, love of neighbor is confused with "being nice" (anger, one's very capacity for moral outrage, is a sin) and questions of justice are conveniently considered outside the realm of one's prayer life. In contrast, we have seen that the only real "answer" to prayer is a changed person on the one hand and a changed people, that is, a changed world or culture, on the other. (pp. 100, 101)

David Augsburger, in *Anger and Assertiveness in Pastoral Care*, also points to the confusion Christian leaders in particular may reveal when distinguishing between inappropriate "niceness," on the one hand, and being a good pastor to those whom they are trying to serve, on the other. The results of such "niceness" can be quite negative. Augsburger explains:

> Chronic niceness in a pastor tends to elicit comparable niceness in others, with the result that the negative feelings are not readily shared and resentments accumulate. . . .
> Habitual niceness inhibits the free expression of natural responses. It prohibits easy discussion of differences, making it hard to initiate frank interchange. Participants are kept on guard by the fear that their relationship could not survive a spontaneous hassle if one should erupt.
> Professional niceness maintains distance between persons. . . . Irritations are handled with a "soft touch" and the more intimate levels of trust and risk go unexplored. . . .
> Perpetual niceness creates patterns of denial in relationships, and the pastor's denying style can help set the tone for a whole community's "united front" method of suppressing conflict. . . . (p. 8)

Judging from the above comments by both a Catholic and a Protestant theologian, the problems with avoiding or hiding anger among committed religious individuals are obviously coming to light and being discussed at last. Moreover, such recognition that anger is a part of full religious living, as well as something that is part of the natural order, means that it can't be as easily dismissed as

something inherently "secular" or irrelevant for the believing Christian, as it was in the past.

Even in the case of passive aggressiveness, where anger is carefully disguised, the issue of misplaced and poorly dealt with anger in religious groups is coming to light, as can be seen in the following quote from Rosine Hammett and Loughlan Sofield's book *Inside Christian Community*:

> Passive-aggressive persons are extremely difficult to deal with because conflict never surfaces and they are unwilling to cooperate. They manage to maintain a rather serene picture of themselves as well-controlled, proper, nonviolent human beings. But they are not the peaceful or loving personalities they pretend to be. When they are confronted with the disruptive nature of their style, they do not easily give it up. Often they remain remote and inaccessible to healthy relationships. If any relationship begins to build, the passive-aggressive person quietly withdraws, leaving hurt behind. *Unfortunately, this personality is common in religious communities.* (p. 75)

Consequently, no longer is the bittersweet veneer of passive aggressiveness seen as the religious ideal to be followed and modeled. Christian writers and lecturers are now openly condemning such pseudolove of neighbor.

PASSIVE AGGRESSIVENESS DEFINED

Although the term *passive-aggressive* is used quite commonly today, many of us still are not quite clear as to what it actually signifies. The American Psychiatric Association does give us some information on it in its portrayal of persons who use indirect anger as a primary defensive style. In *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders III*, a passive-aggressive personality disorder is described as that in which there is "resistance to demands for adequate performance in both occupational and social functioning; the resistance is expressed indirectly rather than directly. The consequence is pervasive and persistent social or occupational ineffectiveness, even when more self-assertive and effective behavior is possible. The name of the disorder is based on the assumption that such individuals are passively expressing covert aggression." (p. 328)

George Stricker, in *Passive Aggressiveness: Theory and Practice*, helps us understand the passive-aggressive personality further by theorizing as to its possible origin. He writes:

> In a passive-aggressive personality, the frustration of dependency is accompanied by parenting which is so threatening that the child does not dare to express feelings directly. The threat may be due to harsh, demanding parental attitudes or it may be due to tenuous parenting, so that the child does not dare risk losing whatever little support he or she

Source of Passive-Aggressive Behavior

FRUSTRATION
OF NEEDS
OR DESIRES

ANGER
&
BELIEF

IF I SHOW
ANGER I'LL BE
REJECTED

INDIRECT
EXPRESSION
OF ANGER
(UNCONSCIOUSLY
MOTIVATED)

e.g., (*in childhood*) bed wetting; stuttering
e.g., (*in adulthood*) slowness; occupational ineffectiveness

has been able to gather. In either case, the direct expression of the anger would lead to consequences so noxious that the expression is inhibited, but the feeling remains sufficiently compelling that its expression is sought through alternate channels. The child is unlikely to be able to tell a parent to stop being overly restrictive and demanding, but he or she may be able to wet the bed or stutter or eat poorly without drawing an excessively punitive response. The child is thus likely to get a good deal more attention, negative though it may be, and will also cause the parents to suffer without having to take individual responsibility for doing so. Unfortunately, the choice of such an approach is likely to provide the child with a history of failure experiences and serve to exaggerate the deficit in self-esteem which has already been initiated by the early failures to have its needs met. . . .

In the adult, we can expect to see a relatively agreeable facade, for the person has learned long ago not to express anger directly. Any demand placed on the person, however, is likely to recall earlier demands and lead to similar responses, namely, oppositional and negativistic resistance while maintaining an aura of compliance. The clearer the demands or the more frustrated the dependency needs, the more we can expect to see the person becoming angry, inhibiting anger, becoming resistant, and feeling anxious lest the anger be discovered. (pp. 11, 12)

Although most Christians are not suffering from passive-aggressive personality disorder, many oc-

casionally use a passive-aggressive style of dealing with others, especially when they view church leaders as authoritarian, or when as sincere Christians they feel they have no right to experience and express anger. A sad reality is that illustrations of this abound in many Catholic diocesan offices, agencies, and other settings where the person in charge is a priest and the assistant is a religious sister. In such cases, the sister may be fearful of expressing disagreement or confronting the sexism she perceives. To do so would be to threaten a man with possibly limited understanding of women, which could result in her being fired. Consequently, she either swallows the anger until it builds up to the point of an outburst, or she directs it into passive-aggressive behavior that is unconsciously aimed at hurting the priest and making the work atmosphere tense and the office unproductive. If this problem were discussed in an open way, it might lead to opportunities for growth for both parties involved and ultimately contribute to a more vital church. Instead, it often goes unaddressed or builds up to a very explosive situation where neither charity nor justice are served well. So there is much value for both clergy and religious to be able to uncover and deal with behavior that induces passive aggressiveness; this would reduce sexism and improve male-female relations in the church and among Christians who constitute the vital community we call "the people of God."

The key element to recognize in this form of interpersonal behavior is that overt passive aggressiveness, which takes the form of passivity, is used to express feelings of aggression without the person being aware of it. Thus, recognition of this style of behavior is important not because anger is good but because indirect, unconscious expression of it by us and others is destructive.

UNCOVERING PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR

Appreciating when and how passive aggressiveness is present is the logical place to start in presenting an overview of this style of indirectly dealing with anger. In the Christian setting—though naturally by no means restricted to it—there are a number of classic ways in which persons demonstrate passive aggressiveness. During personal reflection as well as during work with Christian persons or groups, noting the ways anger seeps out can be helpful. Typically, passive aggressiveness is demonstrated by behavior such as obstructionism, procrastination, forgetfulness, stubbornness, or intentional inefficiency.

A general but often accurate and useful way of uncovering passive-aggressive behavior is to look for unexpected angry reactions in ourselves and others. When we or others are passive-aggressive, the aggression is covert and therefore beyond the immediate awareness of the person behaving this

way. Thus, uncovering passive-aggressive behavior, particularly in ourselves, is usually difficult.

By definition, when we act in this way we are psychologically trying to avoid being seen as aggressive, though the underlying feeling is negative. Though we may be feeling hostile, we overtly appear passive and pseudocompliant. We believe we are trying to do the right thing; so even though we may not be as prompt, for instance, as the other person would like, we feel we are doing our best and are upset if we are accused of dragging our feet. Consequently, time needs to be taken for self-examination to uncover our motivations for acting the way we are. In doing this we must try to recognize our anger and unmask our passive aggressiveness.

Whether in prayer, moments of meditation and contemplation, or periods of introspection, Christians have long been expected and disciplined to take stock of their lives on a daily basis. In Roman Catholic circles, those in ministry have usually been educated to make a daily consciousness examen. This practice has been somewhat on the wane, but with the encouragement provided by the writings of George Aschenbrenner, interest in continuing the practice in a holistic fashion has revived over the past decade.

More recently, a number of books have been published on self-examination and personal awareness for Christians. In *Christian Introspection: Self-Ministry through Self-Understanding*, I strongly suggested that persons take the time to view their personalities introspectively with an eye to how God might be influencing their lives. The goal is to help people see how their personality facilitates their ministry and to help them be aware of when they trip over it (i.e., become overly defensive) in their effort to reach out to others. Included in that book is a brief section on anger. With respect to passive aggressiveness, the use of the process the book describes (Christian introspection), or that of consciousness examen, provides an opportunity for us to see the vitality of anger and the destructiveness

that comes with trying to deny anger "for the greater glory of God."

Any self-examination process gives one a chance to review motivations for behavior and how and why certain emotions and thoughts arise. If this part of the process is taken seriously, then passive aggressiveness and self-righteousness, which are destructive to the whole community, can be curbed.

To help achieve a better recognition of anger, its indirect expressions (including passive aggressiveness), and the motivations we as Christians have with respect to uncovering and dealing with it, some basic questions such as the following might be included in the daily examen or introspective process:

- What did I get angry at today? (not, What made me angry?)
- With whom did I get angry today? (not, Who made me angry?)
- In addition to the apparent reason for my being angry or annoyed, what might be other reasons in me that would be responsible for the anger being so great?
- How did I deal with my anger or annoyance? Did I try to conceal it? Did I deny it or play it down? Did I wrap it in a pseudo-Christian cover? ("Don't get me wrong, I don't dislike him, just what he is doing to the institution and himself." "I really feel he is misguided; he's really not a bad person.")
- How did I spontaneously allow my anger to rise in my mind so I could examine it?
- Was I able to review my anger and try to deal constructively with disagreements, with the understanding that communication won't solve everything, but that opening up a discussion about our differences is certainly a start? Or did I just try to scare people with my anger or win them over by giving in and being passive?
- Did I present my anger to the source of it, or did I put the anger on someone else or make believe I wasn't angry?
- With specific reference to my own possible passive-aggressive tendencies: "Did I act in a way that was obstructionistic?" "Did I dawdle or procrastinate? Was I stubborn or forgetful?" "Was I suprised by someone else's anger to something I did or said?" (This last question is a great one to pose as a way of uncovering how we may have covertly expressed aggression without our being aware of it at the time.)

These questions are but samples of the kinds we can use in an effort to uncover, own, appreciate, and deal with anger that comes up as a part of life. The times for examination of self are periods that

provide a natural opportunity to become more sensitive to both the love and anger in ourselves, so that we do not develop into packaged Christians who deny real spontaneity of emotions. Questioning ourselves in this way is a part of respecting life both in ourselves and in others.

CAUSES OF PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR

The etiology of a passive-aggressive *personality* and the causes of passive-aggressive *behavior* in fairly healthy Christians are different. The person suffering from a passive-aggressive personality disorder is experiencing a longstanding difficulty. As we noted earlier in Stricker's comments, it is attributed to early problems with dependency. Essentially, this type of person has failed to have certain needs gratified as a child. Consequently, the child is both frustrated and angry but unsure of what strategy to use to get his or her needs met. There is a fear that "if I am direct, I will be rejected and lose all chance of having my needs met." On the other hand, because of the frustration, the anger must come out in some way, and this is achieved indirectly. Treatment of this type of individual is difficult and involved and not within the purview of this article. Such individuals, when noticed in community living, may need to be referred for psychological treatment.

On the other hand, passive-aggressive behavior in Christians is something we can and should address. Rather than such behavior being tied to a serious personality deficit, it is symptomatic of a problem in the environment. Unfortunately, in many cases Christians train Christians to avoid anger or to be indirect in the way they express it. Meetings, for example, are an ideal place for this to occur. If the dynamics are not understood, then healthy persons who are trying to be aware of and constructively deal with anger can be made to believe that their own process, rather than a distorted religious one, is inappropriate. The following is a simple illustration:

Father Smith: *Jim, you really seemed to be upset at our parish council meeting.*
Jim: *Yes. The way Bill and Mary were trying to close out options other than their own in dealing with the youth group infuriated me. I wanted to let them know, so we could openly deal with it.*
Father Smith: *This is a Christian group, Jim. We all have differences, but anger isn't going to help; you ought to think about controlling it a bit better. We can always drop hints to them when we see them alone.*

Instead of encouraging Jim to learn how to channel his anger openly in a way that would not be destructive to others, the priest is exhorting him to suppress it. If Jim does so, only resentment and "hidden agendas" will result. Also, if anger is handled in the way Father Smith suggests, the community members will not ever deal with their fears of conflict. Thus, they will never achieve the intimacy needed to become a cohesive group or, in religious terms, a "faith community."

Writing memos is another way of showing anger indirectly toward another person; the technique allows us to send the barb from a distance. In a religious community, such written communications are frequently employed to censure someone else safely. One familiar memo technique is to leave a message posted regarding something that has produced anger. The memo usually has three elements: (1) justification of one's own stand (as being correct and "Christian"); (2) reference to the injury being caused by a person vaguely recognizable from the information given; and (3) pseudoforgiveness of the person who did it (so he or she shouldn't retaliate by being angry). The following is an example of a note that might well be seen on the door of a religious community's refrigerator:

> Thursday, February 12th
> Signing out the car is something that I feel I have a responsibility to do; consequently, I try to do this well in advance so as not to cause anyone any inconvenience. Yesterday, I wanted to borrow the car for my usual weekly visit to help my parents, but the car was gone. It had been signed out at the last moment to deliver some goods. Though this possibly could have waited, and though I understand that it was a worthwhile trip, and I recognize I must also compromise, I do ask that in the future we try to set up these journeys in advance so we don't cause unnecessary hardship to each other.
> Thank you.

With respect specifically to the indirect form of expressing anger we call passive aggressiveness (i.e., obstructionism, procrastination, forgetfulness, stubbornness, and intentional inefficiency), there are four common causes for it that we frequently see in Christian settings:

- *Guilt.* The person's belief is that "It is a sin for me to directly express my anger or disagreement. I have no right to voice views contrary to authority."
- *Anxiety.* In this instance, the thought is "If I show my displeasure with the church's (pastor's, superior's, etc.) decision or action, I shall be punished."
- *Apathy.* The underlying attitude in this case is, "What's the sense in getting angry, since it won't do any good anyway."
- *Sacrifice.* This cause is akin to the first one listed above, guilt. The thinking here is, "If I am angry I should swallow it and even do harm to myself rather than impose it on someone else."

In all of the above cases, strategies for correcting this thinking can and should be developed. If they are, we can put an end to the belief that when anger is avoided, it disappears. Moreover, we can open up new possibilities in creative, vital Christian living.

SOME STRATEGIES SUGGESTED

A final question to be faced is, "How shall we deal with passive-aggressive behavior in ourselves and others?" The movement away from burying our aggression and allowing it to arise in a disguised fashion involves recognition, self-reeducation, and appropriate action.

As noted already, recognition of passive aggressiveness becomes possible when we are disciplined in our examen and strive to see when we or others are behaving in ways that block effectiveness. Being alert to situations when others' seemingly appropriate actions result in an angry reaction on our part, and to the times when others seem annoyed about the manner in which *we* are behaving, can open the door to seeing apparent compliant (but actually obstructionistic) behavior in ourselves and others for what it really is— a manifestation of covert aggression.

Accomplishing this is never easy. Obstructionism, procrastination, forgetfulness, stubbornness, and inefficiency often parade themselves as something else. When people deal with us in passive-aggressive fashion we may not recognize their aggression and so feel guilty when we get angry at these persons who are "doing the best they can" but who seem to hinder our progress.

Illustrations of this type of reaction are easy to find. Take a Catholic high school setting, for example. Suppose the principal is a very bright, energetic, but fairly self-sufficient administrator, and she has a fairly strong-willed assistant principal who feels left out of the decision-making process. In such a case, the frustrated assistant principal may unconsciously employ a passive-aggressive style and (1) constantly question the decisions of the principal; (2) forget to implement some of the directives; (3) stubbornly disagree even after a decision is made; (4) take longer than necessary to contact people; or (5) do more research than necessary as part of the planning for assigned projects.

The principal may be angry about her assistant's inefficiency but may only regard the person as inept or overly methodical. She may also feel guilty about getting angry, thinking, "I expect too much of everyone." The problem may then be compounded when she discusses the inefficiency with her assistant, who responds by saying such things as, "Well, what should I do?" This results in more work for the principal, since she has to give detailed directives repeatedly; in effect, she now has two jobs to do. The assistant might say, "Look how

hard I am trying" (attempting to induce further guilt) or might offer an unending list of excuses (the "yes, but" syndrome). However, if the principal in this case has recognized what is actually taking place (i.e., for some reason her assistant feels angry but is not able to deal with it directly) she has actually taken the first step toward solving the problem.

Once passive aggressiveness is recognized, and before any action is taken, the second step entails self-reeducation. This process is necessitated by the four already-mentioned environmental causes of passive-aggressive behavior in the Christian setting. The self-reeducation is as follows:

Old thought (guilt): *It is a sin for me to directly express my anger or disappointment; I have no right to voice views contrary to authority.*
New thought: *If I am angry or disagree, I should try to find out why through self-examination. Then once I own my anger, I should present it in a constructive fashion (i.e., in a neutral, specific way with the goal of trying to find a solution).*
Old thought (anxiety): *If I show I am angry or disagree with him/her, he/she will retaliate.*
New thought: *The worst thing that can happen is that he/she will be angry and not understand. However, I have a right to express my anger and a duty to do it in a constructive fashion—not through an outburst and not indirectly.*
Old thought (apathy): *What's the sense in getting angry, since it won't do any good.*
New thought: *I should not make generalizations and give up but should try to present disagreements that are genuine, with the hope that the other people can appreciate my position and help me appreciate theirs.*
Old thought (sacrifice): *If I am angry I should swallow it and even harm myself rather than impose it on someone else.*
New thought: *Trying to understand my anger and discuss it with someone else in a way that is respectful is in itself a sacrifice because it takes some effort. If I try to hide it, I will not be treating myself respectfully or the other person honestly.*

Such self-reeducation will allow us, and the principal in the illustration, to (1) help recognize and deal with our anger in a productive fashion and (2) assist others to move away from a passive-aggressive style.

Once passive aggressiveness is recognized and we have reeducated our thinking, action is then possible. This does not mean dumping our aggression on others or encouraging them to give us their anger in a shotgun fashion. When we see it in ourselves, it means recognizing that we are in fact angry, owning it, trying to understand it, and communicating it in a way that leads to a solution. When we see it in others, it means trying to find out why they are angry. In doing so we must expect

> **Ministerial assertiveness is grounded in a belief that we as effective Christians can and should understand what makes us angry**

that they may not be aware of it, may deny it, and may try to put the onus back on us. To succeed, we should respond (1) by trying to reward passive-aggressive persons when they are assertive; (2) by helping them face their passivity and not doing the job for them (i.e., by not answering the question "Well, how would you like me to do it?" with a solution of our own, but instead, setting the stage for their self-examination by asking them to find ways they can be more productive); (3) by pointing it out to others when they seem to disagree with the strategy; and (4) by allowing the anger to surface and showing that we are open to discussing it. The ultimate goal when confronting our own passive aggressiveness or that of others is to find out why we or they are angry and why we or they are having problems expressing it directly. All strategies for dealing with passive-aggressive behavior in ourselves and others must deal with these two basic questions.

Once we as Christians, and the religious community in general, stop seeing the emotion of anger as being either good or bad and recognize it as a sign of personal vitality, we will be able to distinguish between *experiencing* the emotion of anger, on the one hand, and expressing or dealing with anger, on the other. With such an awareness we can begin to work on using our anger constructively, instead of trying to eliminate it through suppression, denial, avoidance, or passivity. In addition, we can avoid the opposite extreme of confusing assertiveness with aggression and believing that we should fight back by stamping on others first or in return.

Ministerial assertiveness is grounded in a belief that we as effective Christians can and should understand what makes us angry; be able to relate the feelings of anger to a specific issue; find the courage to recognize and remove unfinished business in our personality so the conflict area can be put into realistic perspective; and be able to communicate our concerns to others in a manner that does not unduly raise defensiveness. It is also based on an appreciation of the fact that sometimes we are angry with others because our needs or expectations are unrealistic. When they are realistic, ministerial assertiveness calls for an openness that does not justify being aggressive and driving others away, that does not glorify passivity and prevent a free, real interchange, but allows angers to be dealt with as they arise rather than when they blow up after a long period of being buried in a sea of "niceness."

The owning of anger is essential not only to promote honest interpersonal relations among us as Christians but also to help us focus clearly on the validity of being angry at injustices and disgusted with what is wrong with society today. Anger is not only a personal human emotion but also at times a sign of our intense concern for others. It alerts us to the frustration of our realistic and unrealistic needs, and it also points out when others are touching sensitive areas in our psychological makeup or are committing community injustices that are personally unacceptable.

Anger, then, can be a diagnostic tool to help us learn about ourselves, our defenses, our limits, and our beliefs, but such diagnosis cannot take place if anger is seen as forbidding and is buried before it can be viewed and analyzed for what it is. Thus, passive aggressiveness, which is built on the denial of anger and kept hidden under a seemingly loving veneer, needs to be uncovered and dealt with as part of our movement toward living creative Christian community. Church leaders who still view anger as a threat that must be punished and not as an indication of possible real injustices that should be addressed must be reeducated to be more open and less fearful. To do less is to deny freedom and growth in the church at a time when it is sorely needed.

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Cautions in Pastoral Counseling

MICHAEL E. CAVANAGH, Ph.D.

Dealing with the psychological dimension of human behavior is very complex, as is handling the spiritual dimension; and evaluating, treating, and healing the two together, which is the task of pastoral counseling, is infinitely complex. Moreover, pastoral counseling can do either great good or great harm, even in one counseling session.

It is both ironic and frightening that some of the same people who would never dream of treating the body are dauntless when it comes to treating people's psyches and souls. The pastoral counselors who are the most effective are generally those who know what to be cautious about and behave accordingly. This article discusses five of the many cautions of which ministers in general, and pastoral counselors in particular, should be aware.

CAUTION NUMBER ONE

Pastoral counselors must have a clear definition of their role so that they do not fall into roles that are at best unhelpful and at worst actually harmful.

Just as it is vitally important that surgeons function as surgeons and not as psychiatrists, it is essential that pastoral counselors function only as pastoral counselors. Someone who is acting as a pastoral counselor should not attempt to be a regular counselor, a general pastoral minister, or a spiritual director.

Regular counselors spend several years of postgraduate education and training before they are eligible for state licensing. Although they are or-

dinarily more competent than pastoral counselors to deal with psychosocial problems that are in the diagnosable range, they do not have training in pastoral issues. General pastoral care ministers help people meet their daily physical, psychosocial, and spiritual needs. General pastoral care is typically more directive, educational, and short-term than pastoral counseling, and less structured, clinical, and confrontive as well. Spiritual directors help people deepen their union with God by increasing their awareness of God's presence in themselves, others, and the world at large. Spiritual directors help people seek answers to such questions as "Who is the Lord to me?" and "Who am I to the Lord?" Pastoral counselors have specific education and training in pastoral counseling. Their competence lies in helping people with concerns or problems that have both psychosocial and moral-religious implications.

It is important that ministers in general, and pastoral counselors in particular, be aware of their proper role and area of competence. To this end, the following recommendations may be helpful.

First, ministers should offer people what they ask for and need. If people ask for pastoral counseling, they should not be offered regular counseling. Pastoral counseling was never meant to be a cheap substitute for regular counseling or a way of avoiding whatever stigma is still attached to seeing a regular counselor or psychotherapist. Ministers may see this more clearly if they consider the possibility that people who need pastoral counseling will go to regular counselors because they do not

feel comfortable with ministers. By the same professional and ethical principles, people who ask for and need pastoral counseling should not be offered general pastoral care, spiritual direction, religious education, or evangelization, nor should people who need general pastoral care or spiritual direction be given pastoral counseling.

Second, ministers should recognize that what people ask for and what they need may not be the same. A person seeking help from a pastoral counselor may, after evaluation, turn out to need regular counseling instead; another person may think she needs pastoral counseling when she really needs spiritual direction; yet another may think he needs spiritual direction when he actually needs pastoral counseling.

Third, ministers should realize that although most, if not all, subspecialties of ministry overlap to some minimal degree, they are essentially separate, each requiring specific education, training, and competence. Therefore, like any professional, a minister should be able to intelligently and comfortably refer people to the appropriate minister or counselor and should not attempt to help people who require a service that falls outside his or her area of competence.

CAUTION NUMBER TWO

Pastoral counselors should not underestimate the complexity of the situations they face, even if the situations appear relatively simple.

One source of complexity is the difference between a person's *stated* problem and his or her *real* problem or problems. Often, people's stated problems are not their real problems, either because they are unaware of what their real problems are or because they are reluctant to discuss them. Moreover, when individuals are experiencing so much distress that they must seek help from a counselor, they often have more than one problem.

For example, a woman may tell a pastoral counselor that her problem is that her husband is an alcoholic. It could be that her stated problem and her real problem are the same; however, it could also be that her husband is not really an alcoholic, but she needs to perceive him as one in order to justify her own increasing symptomatic behavior (depression, emotional indifference, irritability, temper outbursts), which has more to do with her own dynamics than with those of her husband.

It could also be that her husband is an alcoholic, but she has a vested interest in his remaining one. As long as he is impaired, she is not forced to face her deep fear of intimacy, her sexual disinterest or revulsion, and her unconscious need to suffer and be unhappy. If her husband does stop drinking and becomes a good husband once again, her problematic behavior will continue, and she will blame it on "past hurts" in the marriage. Unless her husband is strong, he will use her behavior as an excuse to drink again, thus returning the relationship to its state of pathological equilibrium.

From even these brief examples, it can be seen that problems will arise if pastoral counselors automatically assume that the stated problems are the real ones, or the only ones present.

A second source of complexity is the distinction between problems and symptoms. Typically, people refer to their symptoms as their problems. For example, a man tells a pastoral counselor that his problem is that he is depressed, when in fact depression is his symptom, and his problem is that he is repressing strong feelings of loneliness, resentment, or guilt, or that he has an endocrine dysfunction. To treat this man's symptom (depression) directly by encouraging him to reduce his work load, get more sleep and exercise, appreciate his blessings, see the bright side of life, or pray more will only increase his depression, because none of these homespun remedies will work.

A third source of complexity is the determination of cause and effect relationships. The following example reflects the problems that arise when specious cause and effect relationships are postulated and acted upon.

A husband complains to a pastoral counselor that his wife was "the best wife and mother in the world until she hit 45. Then she completely changed. She's going through a midlife crisis, but she's not pulling out of it." If the pastoral counselor accepts the husband's view of cause and effect (problematic behavior caused by midlife crisis), he will make a serious mistake, because, in reality, this man's wife has never been as psychologically and spiritually healthy as she is now. What upsets the husband is that his wife finally has sufficient psychological strength to stand up to his dominating and manipulative behavior. Moreover, she is finishing college and meeting new friends, healthy pursuits that she has previously deprived herself of because of her husband's possessive and jealous attitudes.

The pastoral counselor who perceives the true cause and effect (wife's psychosocial growth creates significant anxiety in her husband because he feels he will lose control over her or lose her to someone else) will be able to construct an appropriate counseling plan, whether or not the husband is willing to participate in it.

Distinguishing between stated causes and real causes, symptoms and problems, and specious and true cause and effect relationships are only three of a myriad of complexities inherent in pastoral counseling.

CAUTION NUMBER THREE

Pastoral counselors should be exquisitely aware of how different each individual is from every other and

how much harm can result from assuming similarities that do not exist.

In regard to this caution, there are at least three basic mistakes that pastoral counselors can make. The first is to have a set of "therapeutic shoulds" that they consider universally valid and applicable. The following are examples of common "therapeutic shoulds" that are as likely to create problems as to reduce them.

- People who are having problems should get counseling—even if they possess none of the qualities necessary to benefit from it, for example, adequate motivation, openness, insight.
- People who are having problems should get in touch with their spiritual side and renew their relationship with God—even if the moral inventory required to do this would create an intolerable degree of guilt and self-loathing at this time.
- People who are having problems should become less selfish and more sensitive to the needs and feelings of others—even if it was doing exactly this that created the majority of their problems in the first place.
- Married couples who are having problems should sit down with each other, with or without a counselor, and discuss their honest feelings with each other in order to clear the air—even if the people are not anywhere close to being ready to acknowledge those feelings to themselves, much less to acknowledge them to the other or hear the other's reaction.
- Childless married couples who are having problems should have children to get their minds off themselves—even if they cannot handle the domestic stress they already have.

A second mistake is to assume that what worked for the last person with a particular problem will help the next person with a similar problem. For example, a pastoral counselor has suggested to parents who were grieving over the death of their child that they go away together for a few days and strengthen their love and support for each other. Because this seemed to be helpful, the counselor makes the same recommendation to the next pair of grieving parents, who take her advice and then spend the days away blaming each other for the child's death.

A third mistake is to operate on the "If I were you . . ." principle. For example, a pastoral counselor advising a troubled seminarian may think or even say, "If I were you, I would take a leave of absence from the seminary and get some counseling, date, and work, then reassess matters a year from now." There is one problem with this approach, namely, that the pastoral counselor is not the seminarian, never was the seminarian, and never will be the seminarian. In cases like this, pas-

toral counselors may be expressing their own needs more than addressing themselves to the needs of seminarians.

All of these mistakes stem from a failure to realize that each individual is made up of a unique combination of genes, constitution, and learning. Pastoral counselors must treat individuals as if they are unique, because, in fact, they are. To foist pseudouniversals on people, whether they were derived from the church, society, or one's own private notions, is to invite serious problems in pastoral counseling.

CAUTION NUMBER FOUR

Pastoral counselors should have a realistic view of human behavior, so that they do not fall into traps that are mutually damaging.

Realism about human behavior lies midway between naiveté (optimism) and suspicion (pessimism). Great harm can result when pastoral counselors lean toward either end of this range. Since it seems that when Christians sin in this regard, they tend to sin on the naive side, I want to briefly discuss four relevant considerations.

First, it is important that pastoral counselors distinguish between helping people *feel* better and helping them *get* better. Many if not most distressed people who seek help from pastoral counselors want to be assured that (1) their distress is not their responsibility but their spouse's, child's, parent's, friend's, boss's, or religious superior's; (2) they are partially responsible for their distress, but someone else is far more responsible; (3) what others perceive as problematic behavior in them is in fact appropriate, if not actually healthy, behavior; (4) they cannot feel better until a significant other begins to behave differently toward them; or (5) the church, scripture, and God are on their side and not on the side of whoever is the source of their distress.

Obviously, if any of these assurances is appropriate, it should be given in one form or another. It is likely, however, that in the majority of instances none of these assurances will be appropriate or even useful in helping people solve their problems. Therefore, for a pastoral counselor to offer such assurances routinely is to render a disservice, even though people will be temporarily grateful.

Second, it is important that pastoral counselors understand that psychoreligious problems can be mild, moderate, or severe, and that to resolve or significantly reduce moderate and severe problems may take one, two, or more years of counseling. If this is not clearly understood, inappropriate pressure may be placed on the person in counseling to "perform" better, and on the pastoral counselor as well.

Third, some people who seek the help of a pas-

toral counselor do not want to rid themselves of their distress. Consciously or unconsciously, they need to be depressed, anxious, confused, resentful, defensive, hostile, insensitive, uncaring, controlling, obnoxious, suspicious, manipulative, or hedonistic. They need to hang onto their maladjustive behavior, because it gives them some sense of control over their lives or the lives of others. For example, as long as a person is depressed, he does not have to face what for him are the overpowering anxieties of work, marriage, parenthood, and life in general. If he were to lose his shield of depression, he feels, he would disintegrate in the face of these anxieties. As paradoxical as it may sound, depression is the glue that holds his psyche and soul together. Anyone, even a pastoral counselor, who seeks to loosen the person's grip on his maladaptive behavior will meet with massive resistance. Sooner or later, the pastoral counselor must face this individual with the true nature and purpose of his symptoms if any progress is to be made.

Fourth, people under stress are not always reliable eyewitnesses. Significant others in the person's life are often perceived, and therefore described, as possessing negative qualities that they do not really have. For example:

- A father may describe his teenage son as "arrogant," when actually he is simply honest.
- A nun may describe her superior as "manipulative," when in reality she is simply doing her job as superior.
- A woman may describe her regular counselor as "too secular," when in fact he is only trying to loosen her hold on a neurotic use of her religion.

Pastoral counselors should keep from being swept along by the perceptual stream of the person in counseling. Those who judiciously weigh the perceptions of people and personally check them out when appropriate will be in a much better position to be helpful.

CAUTION NUMBER FIVE

Pastoral counselors should have a clear and deep appreciation of what "pastoral" means, so that they will be true ministers and not simply regular counselors or, what is worse, damaging counselors.

The term *pastoral* describes behaviors that are both religious (that is, clearly Christian, Jewish, etc.) and helpful (that is, psychologically sound, theologically enlightened, and humanly empathetic). Counseling that is nonreligious or only superficially religious is not pastoral counseling, and counseling that is religious but not helpful is neither pastoral nor counseling. With this in mind, pastoral counselors should remember these final four recommendations.

First, pastoral counselors should realize that

It is important
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there is more than one theology. The "mainstream of theological thought" has many currents. A minister who applies one theology to all people and all situations is like a regular counselor who operates from one theory of personality and tries to stretch and shrink everyone's psyche to fit it.

Second, whatever a pastoral counselor's theologies are, they should be clear, articulable, and consistent. Effective pastoral counselors have woven into one thematic fabric their understanding of the nature of God, scripture, revelation, tradition, grace, morality, church teachings, authority, and law. This forms a sharp contrast to ad hoc theologies, which lack substance and consistency.

For example, a man who is grief-stricken over the death of his wife seeks help from a pastoral counselor. The counselor, reaching instinctively for his box of theological band-aids, assures the man that he and his wife will soon be united again in heaven. The man, beginning to look confused, responds, "But yesterday's gospel said that husbands and wives will not be joined together in heaven." Now what does the pastoral counselor do?

Third, pastoral counselors should realize that part of a well thought out theology is the acknowledgment of areas of confusion and ignorance. Pastoral counselors who convey the impression that they possess all the theological answers also convey the impression that they are ignorant, simple, or arrogant. Part of being pastoral is to share people's ignorance and confusion and the attendant anxieties. This can be far more helpful than fumbling for superficial or nonexistent answers.

Fourth, pastoral counselors should understand that many of the problems that people bring to them are directly or indirectly related to the church's teachings on morality. Therefore, it is incumbent on pastoral counselors to have an up-to-date and sound understanding of moral theology. To this end, the following points should be kept in mind and studied more fully.

- Pastoral counselors must deal with concepts of moral theology, but they must also consider subjective culpability and responsibility and the potential of each individual to act in ways that are more virtuous. In other words, there are significant differences between the moral order and the pastoral order.
- When a person faces a dilemma in which he or she cannot avoid an evil no matter what is done, traditional wisdom requires the individual to pursue the greater duty.
- People may not be psychospiritually capable of changing their behavior overnight. Therefore, they should be judged and should judge themselves according to their attempts as well as the results of their efforts.
- Reasonable dissent from authoritative, noninfallible teachings is possible within the church. This should be made clear to people receiving counseling, and the criteria for legitimate dissent should be explained.
- According to the principle of "fundamental option," one should look at the person's fundamental or basic life theme when evaluating the gravity of specific acts. For example, a person who generally lives a life of Christian love and justice would be judged less harshly for isolated immoral acts than would a person who chooses to live a life of selfishness and exploitation.
- The moral law and a moral decision are not the same. Moral law consists of objective and universal principles, whereas a moral decision results from an intellectual, affective, and spiritual decision about whether the law serves to increase or decrease the gospel virtues of love, justice, and freedom in an individual's life.

The process of making a personal moral decision entails knowing and respecting the formal teachings of the church, the praxis of believers in the community, the work of theologians, the sense and experience of all Christians, dialogue with a representative of the church, and prayerful discernment. In the last analysis, it is the individual who must take responsibility for the decision.

Finally, pastoral counseling, like regular counseling, can be helpful, unhelpful, or harmful. Unfortunately, the spiritual and psychological effects that are harmful are usually not as visible as the effects of bodily maltreatment would be. Therefore, ministers must develop an acute sensitivity to what can harm the psyches and souls of people in counseling.

This ability stems from both a natural sensitivity and a cultivated sensitivity that can be acquired by regularly reading relevant material and attending courses, seminars, and workshops, and by acquiring as much supervised experience as possible. This last is especially important, because without supervision a counselor can make the same mistakes year after year without realizing it. Moreover, especially with difficult counseling situations, it is important to be able to discuss the issue with another counselor in order to deepen and broaden one's vision.

Pastoral counseling is not for amateurs or for professionals in related but different fields. Pastoral counseling is a serious endeavor, as serious as the practice of medicine or law; and some would even say that the stakes are infinitely higher.

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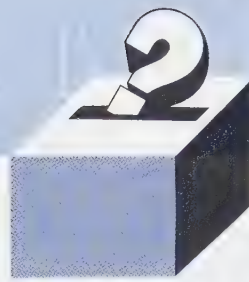
SOME PRIESTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD BROTHERS

Reply by James J. Gill, S.J., M.D.

Question: I belong to a religious order of men that includes both priests and brothers. I myself am a brother. I have had to live for years with some priests who speak and act as if we brothers are second-class members of the community. There are other priests, however, who always treat us as equals. What is really going on deep down in the psyche of those who would probably deny they feel superior to us but who deal with us almost condescendingly? Can we do something to change them?

Answer: Unfortunately, it is impossible to interpret—without interviewing each one—what is going on inside all the priests you see acting the way you describe. An important general finding in psychology is that a given type of external behavior can flow from a variety of different forces at work within different individuals. Still, I think it is possible to give an answer that will probably be true in *most* instances that match your description of the priests you have in mind. It is a matter of *attitude*.

These priests are manifesting a negative attitude that is reflected in their behavior, i.e., in their words and/or actions. Their attitude, as you have presented it, amounts to a devaluation of brothers. Let's look at what an attitude is, what its functions are, and what is required if a change is to occur.

What is an attitude? It is a tendency to evaluate a person, group, idea, or thing either favorably or unfavorably. In other words, it is a predisposition to make an intellectual judgment that is either positive or negative about the value of the person(s) or object(s) being considered. At times, such a predisposition is demonstrated in words. For example, if people have the attitude that animals are not of much worth, they can see on the roadside the body of a collie that has been killed by a passing car and say, "It's only a dog." You can easily recognize the devaluation in such a statement. On the other hand, an attitude can be revealed through people's actions. For example, those who believe children don't have anything to say that is worth listening to will probably not respond when a child is talking, but will likely turn their eyes, head, and attention elsewhere. Our words and actions are often revealing our attitudes when we are not conscious that this is happening, and most of the attitudes we thus display have been adopted by us in the past without our being aware that we were forming them.

Our attitudes generally include more than just a cognitive element, a judgment about worth; they have an affective component as well. That is to say, they are accompanied by a feeling or an emotion that may be either strong or weak. For example, if a college student tells you, "My parents gave me only a second-hand car for my birthday," it is easy to hear a feeling of dissatisfaction with the gift, toward which the attitude is directed. The word "only" gives away the negative evaluation that is being cognitively made. Together, the cognitive and affective aspects of the attitude motivate the consequent behavior—the speaking and acting in ways that reveal the underlying attitude.

Religious people have attitudes toward the church's hierarchy, papal pronouncements, liturgy, role of women, theology of liberation, and countless other issues. Some are pro and others are con, involving a varying degree of pleasurable or painful emotion. These, like most attitudes, originate in personal experiences that give rise to the beliefs (cognition) intrinsic to them, but parents,

teachers, peers, films, and TV also contribute to shaping them.

Among the purposes that our attitudes serve are (1) a *utilitarian* function: we are inclined to evaluate favorably the things that will help us attain our goals and needs or will bring us pleasure; (2) a *value-expression* function: they reflect our central values and the way we see ourselves; and (3) a *knowledge* function: they help provide a frame of reference for comprehending our environment, serving as standards against which we apply new information. Psychologist Daniel Katz, in *Public Opinion Quarterly* (vol. 24, pp. 163–204), describes these functions, along with one other, the "ego-defense" function, which is the function that seems most closely related to the attitude of some priests toward brothers.

Our attitudes, as Katz points out, can protect our self-image; we can use them to keep our own self-esteem at a high enough level to stave off feelings of worthlessness and depression. A tendency to evaluate a group of others unfavorably (the way the priests in the question appear to be doing) provides the basis for building up one's ego at the expense of persons who may have nothing to do with actually creating the attitude but who are available as objects for unrealistic comparison. Men who lack adequate self-esteem can look down on women; whites can do the same to blacks, as can Brahmans to pariahs, ordained to unordained. At times, for the same reason, the disparagement is reversed, and blacks look down on whites, religious brothers react similarly to priests, women to men, etc. Such prejudice is not generally maintained in the realm of a person's consciousness. Like most attitudes, one's feeling of superiority and tendency to belittle others is usually expressed in one's behavior unconsciously.

Helping people to change their attitudes and overcome their prejudices is practically never easy. If you want to assist priests who are biased against brothers to adopt a positive attitude toward them, I would recommend that you approach the task patiently and with full awareness that it is highly possible you will not achieve the outcome you desire. The tactic most likely to succeed, I believe, is *confrontation*, which will involve pointing out to the priest the actions or words that appear to reveal his negative attitude. This is usually best accomplished by someone who has a reasonably good relationship with the person being confronted; an antagonistic approach will simply make matters worse.

Help the priest look at his habitual way of thinking about brothers and at the experiences in his past that have provided a basis for his believing what he does about them. Then invite him to look at new "evidence" that might help him to recognize that his old attitude does not correspond to reality. To achieve this awareness, it could be useful for him to go through some new, corrective life experiences with brothers. Sharing work, prayer, and recreational and other activities with congenial, mature, and talented brothers can help a priest to become more appreciative of and realistic about brothers, and break down stereotypes.

I have become strongly convinced that helping people to change their attitudes from negative to positive is generally accomplished far more successfully by providing such corrective experience than by trying to argue them into believing what you want them to.

Nonresidential

Religious

Formation

CARL CLAYTON, F.S.C.

The last ten or fifteen years have seen many redesigned initial formation programs because of the Second Vatican Council's call for renewal within religious congregations. Some of these programs are largely structural rearrangements with new labels. Others have been the results of efforts to reconsider the basic philosophy of formation that certain congregations or provinces of congregations wished to espouse. Currently, it seems accurate to say that most religious communities have initial formation programs composed of three phases, which go by a variety of names. These phases are (1) a period of time leading up to the novitiate; (2) the novitiate itself; (3) the period of first commitment culminating with final profession. Although these three phases do not seem significantly different from those that constituted pre–Vatican II formation programs, it should be understood that each phase is subject to many designs and approaches that can make it considerably different from what was experienced in religious life formation before the later 1960s.

Each phase of initial formation has its special challenge, and no single design has proven universally effective. In my estimation, however, the first period of time (loosely labeled *prenovitiate* formation) has probably received the least attention. In particular, the value of nonresidential formation in this first phase has gone by unnoticed or has been underestimated. I realize that it is no longer considered innovative to attach a period of nonresidential contact to the beginnings of a formation program. This time is often viewed, however, as little more than a natural transition between the work of the vocations office and the start of the formative experience. In this view, a nonresidential program simply means that someone, perhaps the vocation director, is expected to keep in touch with those individuals who have expressed an interest in the congregation. This work may, on occasion, be supplemented by the activities of other interested professed members who also try to maintain some relationship with the potential candidates.

This effort may be useful as far as it goes, but in my view, it does not go far enough. It passes up the opportunity to assist the potential candidates to understand better significant aspects of their human development and growth in Christian living. These understandings are crucial to a greater awareness of the movement of the Lord in their lives and to the choices that follow this awareness. Needless to say, alternative programs are available.

INVITING A DISCUSSION

I would like to present an overview of a more developed first-phase nonresidential program. I describe this program because it is a reasonably

substantial program that has been well received by the men who have joined it since its inception over ten years ago. Perhaps its presentation here will further a discussion of the relative merits of first-phase nonresidential programs in initial formation.

The first-phase nonresidential program is called the *aspirancy* by the Baltimore Province of the Christian Brothers (F.S.C.). Similar operations elsewhere are sometimes called programs for affiliates or associates. The program is offered to men who have, as a minimum, completed their secondary education. We have found that a man is attracted to the aspirancy because he has had some repeated thoughts and feelings that lead him to consider the life of a Christian Brother as a personal option. These thoughts and feelings, though repeated, are most often tentative and confused, so the individual feels that he is not ready for a residential formation program, and in fact, he is not. Nevertheless, because of some degree of interest and openness he is willing to take the steps (application documents and some psychological assessment) that will put him in a program where he can get assistance in sorting out his thoughts and feelings concerning significant personal and vocational issues.

The aspirancy is a program that provides a simple structure of reflection and vocational discernment for men who see the Christian Brothers as one serious option for themselves, and who, in the judgment of the Brother Provincial, are likely to profit from the aspirancy experience. As the aspirant cooperates with the program's design of reflection, prayer, and examination of his life options, he grows in an awareness of the Lord's presence in the people and events of his life.

TIME FOR DECISION MAKING

Thus, the level of commitment that is asked of an aspirant is not that he definitely become a Brother but that he consider the life of the Brother as one of his real options and actively participate in the various aspects of the aspirancy. The men who go on to become Brothers often see the aspirancy in retrospect as the first step in their formation. Yet, in itself, it is simply a time to look at himself and the Brother's life and to try to come to some decision concerning a possible match of the two. What occurs then during the aspirancy is centered on the individual and his life at that particular time. The years of the aspirancy should be valuable to the individual whether he finally opts for religious life or for some other lifestyle. What follows is a rationale for and an outline of the components of the Christian Brothers' aspirancy program.
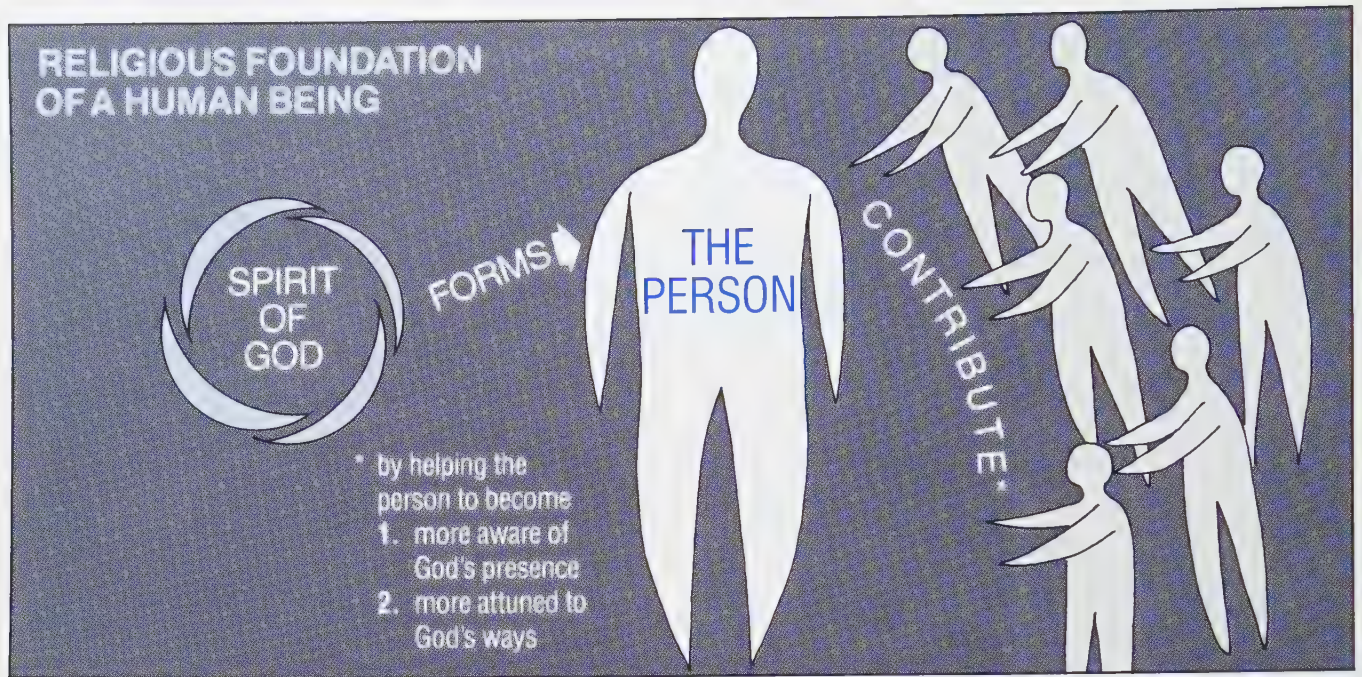
This aspirancy program is rooted primarily in a deep appreciation of the fact that the men who

come to us expressing some interest in the Brothers are experiencing gradual developments in their lives that are often confusing to them. The questions they raise about vocation, and the ebb and flow of their interest in religious life, are just parts of a whole fabric of questions, explorations, and flux between doubt and conviction that make up their present situation. This has been the consistent experience of the Brothers who have worked with these young adults called aspirants. Clearly, many questions relating to a growing sense of self must be considered by an individual before he can be expected to make any authentic, long-term commitment. The aspirancy is the first step in such a consideration.

Although it is essentially a process focused on human growth and maturation, the aspirancy operates out of a basic Christian mind-set that is rooted in the conviction that the fundamental call in anyone's life is a call to a love relationship with the Lord. This relationship must develop over time, and it will do so to the extent that we are open and receptive to the movement of God in our lives. This movement is actually the working of the Spirit in our hearts. God is the one who forms the individual human being. Other people can and do make a contribution to a person's formation when they help to make the individual more aware of God's presence and more attuned to his ways.

Thus, the aspirancy is designed around a Christian understanding of human development. This approach is employed to help the aspirant both with understanding his personal maturation and

Essentials of Aspirancy Program

FEBRUARY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4 *Meeting with director*	5	6	7 *Visit Brothers' Community*	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15 *Workshop Retreat*	16
17 *Workshop Retreat*	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28		

RELIGIOUS FOUNDATION
OF A HUMAN BEING

SPIRIT
OF
GOD

FORMS▶

THE
PERSON

CONTRIBUTE*

* by helping the
person to become
1. more aware of
God's presence
2. more attuned to
God's ways

with becoming more aware of his own individual vocation. These two key elements need further development.

PERSONAL MATURATION

An individual's growth and personal maturation are never mechanical or wholly predictable. In the early years of young adulthood, however, the sense of identity usually becomes clearer, although probably not final. Outlines of an identity present themselves, and these can show generative or stagnant qualities in the individual. Also, as the years of young adulthood move along, the person begins to confront seriously the question of how he relates with other people and to test those strengths that help him share significantly with another person. These issues often arise within a family or community context, in friendships, and at work or school. Studies of human development and ministerial experience seem to agree that as people move out of their teens and through their twenties, most of the challenges and questions they face can be grouped largely around the issues of identity and intimacy. The aspirancy directors in our program are especially sensitive to these matters.

It is precisely in this area of fostering human growth and development that the Christian Brothers' aspirancy and other similar programs stress the value of being nonresidential. It is considered significant that the man who joins the Christian Brothers' aspirancy remains within the context of living that is natural to him. The structure of this aspirancy intentionally makes no special demands on the aspirant concerning his place of residence, other than it not continually be in a

Brothers' community. He may live in his family home, at school, or in an independent living arrangement, whichever he finds appropriate. The process of growth goes on, and significant questions are dealt with in the aspirant's usual setting of life, with all its dimensions playing a part: familial, spiritual, social, economic, educational, professional, and recreational.

AWARENESS OF VOCATION

Consistent with its design model, this aspirancy program approaches the vocation issue, as it does other life issues, from a developmental perspective. It is common experience that the awareness of one's vocation occurs gradually over time, as one grows in accepting one's self and in responding to the evidence of one's life. Thus, in its approach to the religious vocation of Christian Brother, the thrust of the program is to urge the aspirant to grow in an accurate understanding of this life as a vocational choice and in a willingness to reflect prayerfully on how he should understand the action of God working through the events of his life. This last point is important because vocational choice is not simply a matter of weighing the pros and cons of the options one faces and being guided by the outcome. Authentic spiritual reflection also stresses the approach one takes to weighing options. This approach must include some real effort at personal prayer and at trying to see the presence of God in the events of life. It seems that the consistent advice of the masters in this field is that if the aspirant has not had an experience of prayer, he must first be assisted in this area. Also, if the aspirant's sense of the Christian life is so intellec-

tual that he is out of touch with the affective dimension of life, this, too, must be addressed before any real process of vocational decision making can be undertaken.

The collective experience of the Brothers involved in the aspirancy program over the years confirms this advice. Gradual initiation into mature personal prayer and the beginnings of an appreciation of both the intellectual and affective levels of Christian living are essential. This ongoing process is the work of the whole initial formation; the completion of the process, the whole of life itself.

ELEMENTS OF PROGRAM

There are three interrelated parts in the structure of this aspirancy program: a monthly meeting of each aspirant with one of the Brothers who are full-time aspirancy directors; two workshop retreats annually; and periodic visits of aspirants to Brothers' communities.

The monthly meeting of the individual aspirant with an aspirancy director is the ongoing component of the program. Since the directors are full-time in this work, the meetings are normally arranged at a time and place most convenient for the aspirant. These monthly conversations may touch upon a wide range of topics, predominantly the interests of the aspirant and the events of his life over the past month. Also, the director may raise particular topics that are important for the aspirant to consider. Frequently, these topics will be associated with such matters as self-confidence, shyness and social skills, reaction to authority, issues of sexuality, values, personal prayer, personal vocation, and educational development. The aspirancy director is there to challenge the aspirant, to encourage him, but especially to give him the freedom and space he needs to arrive eventually at some significant insights about himself and his future.

The two workshop retreats—one of ten days during August and one of five days between Christmas and New Year's—are the only group activities included in the design of this aspirancy. As such, they are a prominent feature of the program. Each workshop is a mix of information about the Christian life in general and the life of the Christian Brother in particular, with spiritual activities and experiences of communal living and relaxation. A set of themes has been developed for the workshops that helps to provide a standard, but flexible, pattern of topics that are consistent with the spirit and intent of the aspirancy. Included are themes such as "Prayer and Presence," "On Being a Reflective Person," "The Ministries of the Christian Brothers," and "Sexuality and Intimacy."

The aspirants are expected to visit the Brothers' communities periodically to experience their religious lives and ministries. Setting up the visits is not a simple matter, however, since geographical location and amount of available free time vary considerably among the aspirants. To handle these complexities, arrangements for the visits are most often worked out directly between the aspirant and Brothers in the various communities. On occasion, the aspirant's director can be helpful as a facilitator of the process.

The Brothers welcome the aspirants into their community for liturgy and dinner, for an overnight visit, or for a longer stay. These longer visits usually take place in the summer or during the aspirant's term break from college. Whenever possible, the aspirant is given an opportunity to share a bit in the apostolic work of the Brothers.

The point of the visit is for the aspirant to see the Brothers and their works from the inside and to get an understanding of the actual context of a Brother's life. It is important that the aspirant come to a sense of both the idealistic and the realistic in the life he may choose. While these visits are helpful to the aspirants, they also have a positive effect on the Brothers, who are always encouraged to see talented and enthusiastic men expressing an interest in their life.

FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY

An aspirant may leave the program any time he wishes, and the Brother Provincial or aspirancy director may ask an aspirant to leave when that seems appropriate. On the other hand, the decision to move into a residential phase of formation will almost always take place after at least two years in the aspirancy. In rare cases it happens after only one year, and seldom after more than four. This will always be the free decision of the aspirant, but it also requires the recommendation of his aspirancy director and the approval of the Brother Provincial.

All personal and educational financial obligations incurred during the aspirancy are the responsibility of the aspirant. However, he bears none of the costs directly associated with the aspirancy program itself.

The aspirancy and all similar nonresidential programs are, in the final analysis, about the life of the individual. The formal aspects of the program—monthly meetings, workshop retreats, and community visits—are only reference points. What is most important is what happens during the rest of his time outside these structured experiences. The process of growth, integration, and deepening takes place during the time between monthly meetings, if it takes place at all. The structural elements of the program provide feedback to the aspirant as he reflects on some of his personal experience, looks at his life as he has lived it, and continues to seek direction.

Focusing a Congregation's Future

JEAN ALVAREZ, Ed.D.
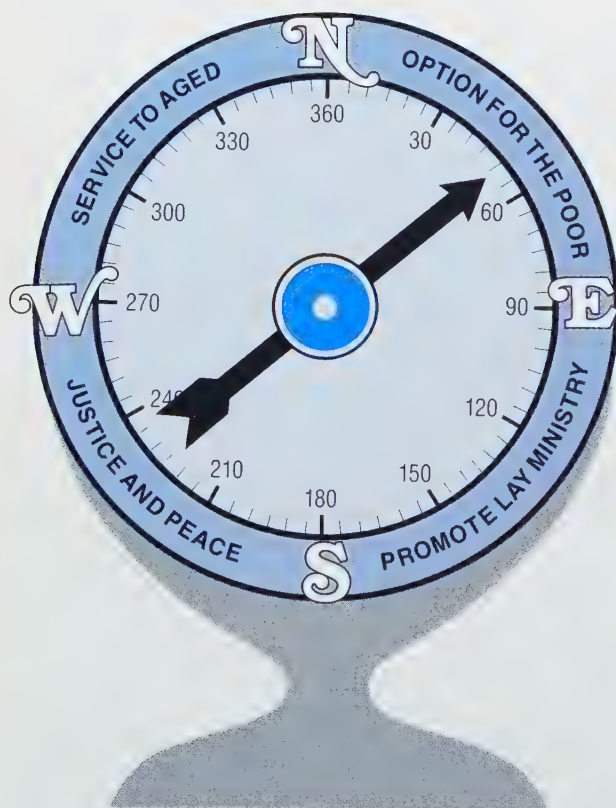
**MISSION STATEMENT
SETS CONGREGATION'S
DIRECTION**

Everywhere I travel among religious congregations these days, people are talking about mission statements. I think this is a hopeful sign, because I have found them to be absolutely crucial for helping congregations plan well and carry out those plans.

I have noticed that it is possible to cluster congregations into four groups: (1) those that don't have mission statements, (2) those that have mission statements that have turned out not to be helpful to them, (3) those that have potentially useful mission statements but that haven't yet figured out how to use them for maximum benefit, and (4) those that have them and are using them well. It is my hope that this article will offer some helpful insights to the first three groups. The last group does not need help (in fact, it is from them that I learned much of what I will suggest here).

FOUR SETS OF QUESTIONS

To lay the groundwork for what follows, I will briefly present a model of what happens in organizations. In spite of their seeming complexity, organizations need only address four kinds of issues or questions (Figure 1).

People often ask whether one of these sets of questions is more important than the others. For example, is it more important to address the reality of an organization's financial situation or to correct any power imbalances that may have developed

Figure 1

MISSION

What is our mission, our purpose, our ultimate goal? Where are we going?

POWER

1. Who is empowered to help us move toward that mission?

2. What is energizing to us about the mission? Why should we commit ourselves to move in that direction?

STRUCTURE

How are we/should we be organized to help us move toward our mission?

RESOURCES

1. What resources do we have that we can bring to the accomplishment of our mission?

2. What additional resources do we need in order to be able to accomplish the mission?

over time? In general, my reply is no, since all of these issues are vital for the healthy functioning of the organization. For two reasons, however, the answer is a bit more complicated than that.

First, everyone has a favorite corner of the Figure 1 diamond, a favorite set of questions. Although no set of questions is actually more important, each of us, at some level, thinks that his or her favorite is the *key*, and we are very resistant to being turned away from it.

The second source of complication is that although there is not a hierarchy of importance among the four sets of questions, they do function in particular relationships with one another, and that means that at certain times, one will be more critical than another. Figure 2 indicates these relationships.

ORDER OF DIRECTION

Notice that control comes from the top down. Whatever the mission of the organization is will determine who comes into power. The person or persons in power can change or adapt the structure (rules, policies, organizational chart, etc.) to help it accomplish their goal. And the structure allocates resources: the budget allocates money, educational programs deliver information, and the ministry placement process allocates personnel. (Budgets, programs, and processes are all structures, whereas money, information, and personnel are all resources.)

Election Provides Example. Let's look at this happening in a real situation, the 1980 U.S. presidential election. Voters were offered the opportunity to choose between quite different missions: lowering unemployment and applying pressure internationally for human rights issues, on the one hand, and curbing inflation and supporting our international friends, regardless of their human rights posture, on the other hand. Our favoring of the second mission brought Ronald Reagan into power. In power, Reagan made adjustments in the structures of government to help accomplish his goals. Perhaps the clearest example of this was the prominence that the Office of Management and the Budget (OMB) assumed in this administration. Although it had always been a significant office, probably no one but the President himself received more attention in the early months of 1981 than did David Stockman. This is because the Reagan philosophy was centered on curbing nonmilitary spending, and the best way of enacting that philosophy was to informally restructure government to add power to the OMB. Finally, as a result of this restructuring, federal money has been allocated in ways that clearly reflect the Reagan priorities. (And of course, by implication, our national priorities, since the differences between the two major candidates were quite clear in November 1980.) Although many of us are not happy with the Reagan administration, it models for us one of the indicators of organizational effectiveness; the distribution of resources that it has brought about is a clear and accurate reflection of its mission.

In the discussion and example above, it may ap-

Figure 2

MISSION

POWER

STRUCTURE

RESOURCES

DIRECTION

LIMITATIONS
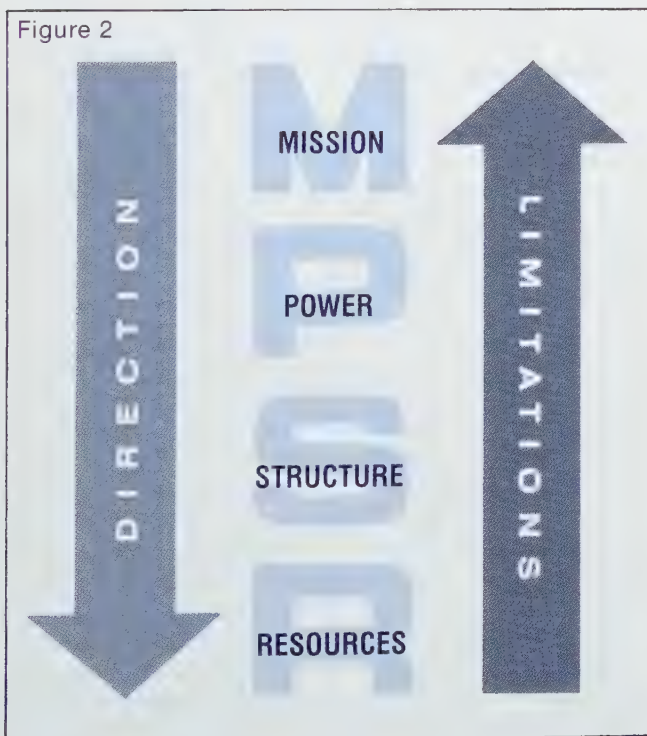
pear that mission questions are the most important. This is aggravated by the portrayal of the relationships in Figure 2, since we all suffer from the assumption that any relationship that *could* be hierarchical *must* be hierarchical. However, the diagram is meant to be understood as showing not a hierarchy but simply the relationships among the four issues. Certainly, no one has more reason than religious congregations to understand the relationship suggested by the arrow on the right-hand side of Figure 2.

ORDER OF LIMITATIONS

As this arrow suggests, limitations come from the bottom up. Resources limit structure: most organizations do not have unlimited resources, and they must therefore decide which of the many structures that they might like to support they actually will support. For example, many congregations that have traditionally staffed schools are finding that their advancing median age and decreasing personnel resources mean that they must begin to choose which schools they can no longer staff. It is generally not a mission of withdrawing from schools but rather the reality of declining resources that brings about this change.

Structure limits power. As I indicated earlier, those in power can do much to tinker with policies, procedures, organizational charts, etc., in order to accomplish their goals. They cannot, however, do whatever they please. There are rules, constitutions, and bylaws that limit their power. If the president of a religious congregation decided that she preferred to be addressed as "Your Majesty" and to retain her position for life, you may be sure that members would look to Canon Law and their constitutions for a way of limiting her power. If they didn't find there a way of limiting her, the next congregational chapter would undoubtedly discuss a constitutional change that would keep her use of power within acceptable limits. (It is my hunch that much of the legislation passed at chapters, particularly those that focused more on legislation than on direction setting, was written specifically to control actual or anticipated abuses of power.)

Finally, power limits mission. If a person comes into leadership in an organization and for some reason does not support its stated or assumed mission, that person moves the organization not toward that stated mission but rather in the direction that he or she personally prefers. This can happen in religious congregations in one of three ways. Probably most common is when the congregation has no stated mission, and each member assumes that their goals for the congregation are, of course, shared by all the members. Leaders elected in that situation are caught in a no-win situation because they have nothing more concrete than their own

hunches to go on in directing the congregation, and they often vacillate among several directions, trying to respond to members' dissatisfaction.

A second situation in which the choice of leaders limits the group's ability to carry out its mission occurs in congregations in which the "chapter of elections" occurs before the "chapter of affairs" (usually a spring election followed by a summer chapter of affairs). In this situation, it commonly happens that the direction that will be taken in the chapter of affairs is not clear by the time the elections take place, and the delegates elect their new leadership without knowing the answer to the question "Leadership for what?" The best they are able to do is to elect good generic leaders: people who are well-liked, trusted, likely to be fair; in short, what James MacGregor Burns, in his book *Leadership*, refers to as "transactional leaders." A group could certainly do worse, but there is absolutely no guarantee in this situation that the people elected share a common vision with each other that would enable them to work together, or are suited to the direction taken by this particular chapter. There is virtually no possibility that this leadership team can be what Burns calls "transformational leaders," those who are so attuned to the crucial issues of *this time* that they are able to invite the members to transcend their usual behaviors and act on their most positive, and perhaps just newly forming, values.

Finally, probably the most excruciating situation for both the congregation and those it elects into leadership is the situation in which the congregation is of two minds about the direction in which it will move. The chapter chooses one direction, but then, to avoid making it seem as though anyone has lost, elects a compromise group into leadership: those who are not fully committed to the new direction, or worse, those who don't understand it or haven't the skills to bring it to life. In this case, as in the two described above, the congregational leaders, through no fault of their own, function as a block rather than a support to congregational direction: power is limiting mission.

MISSION QUESTIONS ASKED FIRST

What can we learn from this short lesson on organizational theory? I think two points are worth highlighting. First, although mission questions are not more important than the others, they are the first questions to be asked in any situation and the most crucial for any congregation that has become stagnant. For example, as congregations watch their median ages getting older and older, there is a tendency for members to be obsessed with the lack of young people entering—a resource concern, because members are one of the primary resources of a group. It's important to remember, though, that no young man or woman enters religious life

Figure 3

MISSION

CHAPTER

POWER

TOP-LEVEL
ADMINISTRATORS

STRUCTURE

STAFF
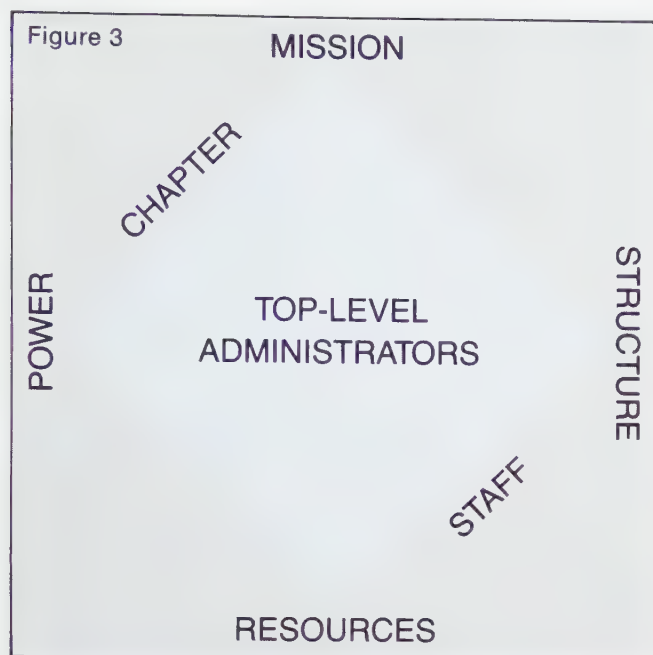
RESOURCES

to respond to the congregation's resource void, to attend to the present members in their old age. New members join because they are attracted and energized by the group's mission. A congregation that seeks new members must first of all ask, "What do we stand for? What do we strive to accomplish?" As they clarify the answers to these questions and then begin to implement the answers through their power, structure, and resources decisions, they will model the kind of congregation that may be attractive to new members.

LEVELS OF DECISION MAKING

Second, the diagram in Figure 2 can give us some insights into the levels of the congregation where different kinds of decisions should be made, the order in which decisions should be made, and the probable impact of various decisions. The kinds of decisions at the top of the diagram, those dealing with mission, and to some extent power, can have the most profound impact on a congregation but are the most difficult to implement and should therefore not be changed frequently. (Frequent changes in mission leave the group in turmoil and unable to commit wholeheartedly to anything.) The kinds of decisions at the bottom of the diagram, resources, and to some extent structure, are much easier to implement and therefore can be made more often but have less far-reaching impact on the group. To illustrate the difference between the top and the bottom of the diagram, think about the differences between a congregational decision to take a preferential option for the economically poor (a mission decision, because it commits the group to a particular future direction) and a decision to change the congregational investment port-

folio (a resources decision). The first is difficult to implement but has, in the long run, the potential to completely transform the congregation. The second can be decided at a staff meeting and implemented over the next month but will have little direct effect on the members.

Because of these distinctions, different kinds of decisions are best made at different levels of the congregation, as shown in Figure 3.

Chapter Decides Mission Questions. The function of the chapter, which meets periodically and is the ultimate decision-making body of the congregation, is to reflect on and decide about questions of mission and to consider who shall be responsible for carrying out the group's mission (questions of power). Note that there is not a single easy answer to the power consideration. There has been a tendency over the last fifteen years to treat any centralization of power as a negative thing, an unfortunate holdover from pre–Vatican II forms of religious life. For the last five years, the pendulum has begun to swing in the other direction, as members realize that there is little point in belonging to a group if the decision making in the group is so dispersed that it is impossible to have a corporate impact. Neither answer is simply correct, but there are advantages and disadvantages to each. The chapter's task is to ask whether at this time in history, and with this mission to accomplish, the mission will be better served by centralizing for maximum impact or by decentralizing for the maximum sense of ownership on the part of members.

Implementation Administrator's Task. Notice that the power question is not answered in isolation but is answered in such a way that it best serves the mission of the congregation. This will also be true of structure and resources: they are always the servants of mission. The function of top-level administrators is to deal primarily with questions of power and structure. They do not need to rethink the mission of the group, because if the chapter has done its work, that has been decided; but they are entrusted with the task of coordinating the implementation of that mission as fully as possible during their term of office.

One power issue that the administration must deal with focuses on the appointment of staff members, local coordinators, etc., who are committed to the mission and will strive to bring it to reality in their sphere of influence. A second power question is, "How much of the power that we have as an administration can we share with our members, friends, and colleagues so that our mission will truly come to life?"

The structural tasks of administration have to do with organizing the congregation so that it can most effectively carry out its mission. Administration is thus responsible for developing policies, designing programs, preparing budgets, and creating plans, all evaluated in relation to their appropri-

ateness as means for furthering the congregational mission.

Staff Oversees Resources. The last level of formal decision makers in the congregation (middle managers, staff members, local coordinators, etc.) functions primarily at the structure and resources levels. In some congregations, functions like personnel and finance are handled at the council level, but in any except the smallest groups they are more appropriately handled by appointed staff members. These staff members structure their own offices to carry forward the congregational mission and are responsible for seeing that the resources that they oversee (money, information, educational and job opportunities) are distributed in a way that reflects congregational priorities.

Without a clear, shared mission, any budget an administration may develop is as good as any other, and any policies are just fine, because there is no criterion against which to evaluate them. With a mission statement, the administration and members have a point of reference from which to say, "We need to put more money into this area," or "This policy will not help us to accomplish our mission in the settings where we minister."

MISSION STATEMENT DEFINED

Nancy Conway, C.S.J., who has worked on ways of breaking down the development of a mission statement into a series of manageable steps, defines a mission statement as "a succinct, public statement that sets forth the unique contribution that the group is striving to deliver. It centers the group in the richness of its past and gives meaning to that history by saying, 'Here is where we are going with what has been given to us.'" Many groups wonder whether what they have already written for the mission section of their constitutions will serve as a mission statement. It would be wonderful if that were the case, given the effort that most groups have put into their constitutions, but in looking at many of them I find that they are usually not at all succinct and tend to be written in a type of jargon that gives them a richness for the members but makes them remote and sometimes incomprehensible to outsiders. (A Sister of St. Joseph knows and appreciates the meaning of an Ignatian-Salesian climate, but the phrase means nothing to a young woman wondering whether this is a group whose values and commitments are similar to her own.) In addition, the mission section of the constitutions is, by its very nature, intended to reflect the eternals of the congregation's mission, whereas the mission statement I am discussing should look ten to fifteen years into the future and try to describe the direction in which the congregation intends to move over that period of time. This does not mean that a group needs to begin from scratch after they have already worked on their constitutions; what

most groups will need to do is some additional thinking, discussing, and writing before their constitutional mission statement can provide the kind of direction I have described above.

Conway suggests that all helpful mission statements have some things in common, and she has identified seven elements generally found in them. These are as follows:

1. a statement of the reason the group exists
2. some reference to the group's roots
3. identification of distinctive features of the group
4. description of qualities of the service that the group is committed to offer
5. a focus on the future direction the group has chosen
6. identification of specific "consumers," those the group has chosen to work with or to serve
7. the use of key words that carry a particular wealth of meaning for members of the group

Let me give two or three examples of each of these, drawn from the actual mission statements of religious congregations, and then come back to deal specifically with the two most important, but also most problematic, elements.

1. *Reason for existence:*
   "... we participate in the evangelizing mission of Christ."
   "... to witness and share the mission of Jesus who calls us to love God with our whole hearts and to love neighbor, even as God loves us."
2. *Reference to roots:*
   "Inspired by the missionary zeal and example of Mother____;...."
   "We choose to respond, as did our Irish Foundresses."
3. *Distinctive features:*
   "As an apostolic community ...."
   "Our participation in this one mission is expressed through many ministries."
   "... uniting justice and charity in our lives."

4. *Qualities of service:*
   " . . . the authenticity of our daily living."
   " . . . serve them with faithful love and joy."
5. *Future direction:*
   "We seek the challenge of new ministries when-ever and wherever greater needs emerge."
   " . . . call one another to conversion of heart in order to transform unjust structures and to hear the cry of the poor."
6. *Consumers:* (We continue to use this word in spite of its somewhat negative connotations, be-cause it reminds us that those with whom we minister are to be active choosers of what we offer, not simply passive recipients of whatever we decide to give.)
   " . . . reaching out to the poor, the needy, the abandoned, the neglected."
   " . . . we live and work lovingly among all per-sons, with a special preference and concern for the poor."
7. *Key words:*
   " . . . prayerfulness, zeal, and compassionate love."
   " . . . gentleness, peace, and joy."
   " . . . witnessing the truth that *God is with us.*"

Earlier, in commenting on the situation of groups that have written a mission section for their constitutions, I indicated that most of those groups would need to do some additional work before that section would become the kind of mission state-ment I have defined here. For most groups, that rewriting centers on the fifth and sixth elements above. These are the two elements that provide the real focus for the group, because they give some very concrete guidance about how the group's lim-ited resources will be used; they are also the most difficult to get agreement about, since affirming one future direction or group of consumers auto-matically denies others. A group that moves to-ward taking a preferential option for the poor al-most invariably meets resistance from some of its members who are not now working with the poor, because those members correctly understand that they will be called to examine what they are doing in the light of that option, and they may need to change the way they are ministering. Because of this resistance (or because people have foreseen that such resistance could develop), many congre-gations have chosen not to deal with elements five and six, and their mission statements or the mis-sion sections of their constitutions are more a de-scription of the group's present stance than they are a commitment to a future direction. This problem is aggravated by the fact that some advi-sors working with groups in the development of their mission statements have suggested that the statements should be only specific enough to in-clude the existing, accepted apostolates of the com-munity. Once a mission statement is in place,

naming the congregation's present ministries, it is nearly impossible for it to provide guidance toward a future that is different from the present. This type of mission statement will not be helpful to a con-gregation.

Because elements five and six are so important to the usefulness of the mission statement but dif-ficult for the group to agree upon, it is important for the person guiding the process of developing the statement to press the group for decisions that will focus on the future. There is a great temptation for groups to build a compromise into the state-ment, thus avoiding conflict (often done in the name of reconciliation), but I find that the conflict avoided at this time is simply postponed until the next point of decision making, and the mission statement, the object of months of development, turns out to have very little real value to the group.

DEVELOPING THE MISSION STATEMENT

If the mission statement is to be acceptable to the majority of members, it is important that it be built upon ideas that come from them. One of the mistakes that administrations sometimes make is to have a small group write the statement, with no congregational input, in an attempt to respond to members who feel overburdened by demands on their time. Although this strategy will indeed pro-tect the administration in the short run, its long-term drawbacks in the form of members feeling no ownership for the statement far outweigh the short-term benefits.

To include the membership but not encumber it by trying to have the writing done as a large group project, I have developed a process that provides times of full group input, times of chapter delegate deliberation, and times of intensive small group writing and editing. The steps in the process are listed below.

1. Delegates or members of the chapter planning committee determine that a mission statement would be helpful to the work of the chapter and future administrations.
2. All members meet in some forum, such as local house meetings, area meetings, or friendship groups, to engage in a corporate reflection pro-cess on the question "If a person were interested in entering the congregation and asked you, 'What do you hope the group will be like in the year 2000?' how would you respond?" The points on which each group reaches consensus, along with the minority opinions from each group, are collated and returned to the dele-gates for consideration.
3. At a prechapter meeting, delegates review these results and ask themselves, "Given what the members have said, what are the concepts that

> **If the mission statement is to be acceptable to the majority of members, it is important that it be built upon ideas that come from them**

we believe should go into our mission statement in order to help us move into the future in a purposeful way?" Three important things for them to check as they work are

a. Do we have all seven elements of a mission statement?

b. Are we building in compromises that will cause us trouble in the future and that would be more profitably resolved now? and

c. Are we sure that the items we are identifying are really mission statement concepts (e.g., "free to serve where needs are greatest") and not specific issues that the chapter will have to address in order to move the group toward achievement of the mission (e.g., "What criteria will we use to determine which needs are greatest?")?

In some of the seven categories (particularly, qualities of service and key words), the delegates may have identified more items than could possibly be included in the final statement, and in these cases the delegates should rank the items, not to tie the hands of those who will write the statement, but rather to give them some guidance as they write.

4. A committee of three to five delegates is selected and writes a first draft of the statement.

5. All members receive the first draft, along with

a. a summary of the process leading to this draft, emphasizing that the draft has come from their input at the corporate reflection process, and

b. the definition and seven elements of a mission statement.

Members are asked to evaluate the draft in relation to the definition and seven elements (not in relation to style, word choice, or even whether it squares with their personal hopes and dreams) and to send their feedback to the writing committee.

6. Writers revise the statement in light of members' feedback and send a second draft out for additional comments.

7. Writers make any additional changes indicated by the feedback to the second draft and prepare the third draft, which will be voted upon at the chapter.

Although this is quite obviously a lengthy process and requires periodic involvement of the already busy members, I think that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages. Members know what the mission statement is, have several opportunities to hear how it will be used, and experience a sense of ownership of it, even if they are not personally enthusiastic about all that it contains. These factors make the implementation of the statement, which is the task of the incoming administration, very much easier. I also have yet to see a statement that doesn't pass, unanimously and enthusiastically, when the delegates vote on it at the chapter.

NOT ALWAYS ADVISABLE

As pointed out earlier, there are some situations in which it doesn't make sense to follow the process outlined above. Perhaps the congregation has just been through a similar consultative process on the development of constitutions, and it seems unlikely that members will be persuaded to review and respond to another document. Perhaps members had been asked earlier to participate in the development of a mission statement that the administration now understands to be missing some of the key elements that could make it useful to the group. It is possible to imagine a number of situations like this, in which the administration should push for the prompt development of a mission statement but should not use the process described above. I have found two approaches to be helpful.

First, there is nothing absolute about the term *mission statement*. The administration of a congregation that has already written a mission statement and then finds that the statement contains some of the flaws mentioned above would do well to give the new document a different name and either quietly retire the old mission statement or use it in conjunction with the new one, highlighting each in situations in which it can be most useful. What commonly is missing in a congregation's first attempt at a mission statement are the fifth and sixth elements—the future direction and the consumers. A name like "directional statement" or "focus statement" will help members see just what it is that's unique and necessary about the new statement.

Second, if the administration or delegates judge that the members will not be willing to give the time necessary for step 1 of the development process, and if the congregation already has constitutions, interim documents, or other statements that reflect the members' thinking, it is possible to have the delegates go through the related documents, looking for sections that correspond to the seven

> **Are we building in compromises that will cause us trouble in the future and that would be more profitably resolved now?**

key elements. Groups that use this approach generally discover that elements 5 and 6 are the most difficult to find, either because the documents do not specify a future direction and preferred consumers or, more commonly, because so many different directions and consumers are specified that no clarity of focus is achieved. In either case the delegates, possibly with the assistance of the members, will only have the limited task of clarifying these two elements before being able to proceed with the process of writing and refining the statement.

Once the development of the statement is underway, delegates can turn their attention to the specific issues that will be the content of this chapter. Now the effort that has gone into the statement begins to pay off.

USING THE MISSION STATEMENT

One of the clearest trends evident in religious congregations is the movement away from legislative chapters and toward directional chapters. I think that this has occurred because time and experience have demonstrated one of the principles described in the beginning of this article: that legislation, which deals with structure and resources (see Figure 2), is not the primary role of the chapter.

Legislation is always enacted in order to accomplish some mission. If the mission of a congregation is not clear and agreed upon, any legislation is as good as any other. Without criteria for evaluating legislation, there is no way of deciding whether a suggested policy or government structure should receive chapter support. The chapter delegates must first clarify direction and then use whatever time and energy they have left to address legislative questions. They can leave the bulk of policymaking to the next administration, confident that once the chapter has set a direction and elected leadership specifically to carry out that direction,

any policies the new administration will make will be consistent with it.

The mission statement will give direction to the congregation but by itself is not specific enough to give a real focus during the next administration. The bridging of this gap between the breadth of the mission statement and the specific policymaking of the incoming administration is the next key to a successful chapter.

STATEMENT PROVIDES FOCUS

It is the nature of a mission statement, because of the way it is developed, to provide a twelve- to fifteen-year focus for the congregation. Each chapter must then ask itself, "What are the crucial issues that must be addressed at this chapter in order to move us toward the accomplishment of our mission?" Some of these may have been suggested in the collated results of the members' corporate reflection process. (Remember that as the delegates used those results to formulate concepts for the mission statement, one of their tasks was to separate mission concepts from potential chapter issues.) Some issues are traditional for chapters—community life, government, formation, etc.—and will surely surface again. I have found it helpful for delegates to work in small groups, trying to name the issues that are unique to this particular time in the congregation's history. The results of this process can make or break the chapter, so it is good to keep two points in mind.

First, the chapter process I advocate is a highly integrated one, from the development of the mission statement, through the issues addressed at chapter and the election of the new administration, to the decisions and actions of the administration and membership in the months that follow the chapter. To maintain this integration, delegates must keep the mission statement at the center of their reflection and discussion as they consider issues. It is easy for delegates to identify issues immediately after naming mission statement concepts, because enthusiasm is running high. At the next chapter, when the mission statement is still in effect but is old news, it is more difficult to maintain the connection.

Second, there is an important distinction to be made between symptomatic issues, which are readily apparent and may already have been the object of much discussion, and underlying issues, which cause the symptoms, but may not even have been named yet. It is these underlying issues that when carefully considered at a chapter can help the group to make great forward movement. An example may help illustrate the difference between symptomatic and underlying issues. Community life is a frequently raised issue, and yet dealing with it directly at chapter after chapter generally has not solved the problems associated with it.

Figure 4	Mission Statement		
Issue 1	Issue 2	Issue 3	Issue 4
Proposal 1a	Proposal 2a	Proposal 3a	Proposal 4a
Proposal 1b	Proposal 2b	Proposal 3b	Proposal 4b
Proposal 1c	Proposal 2c	Proposal 3c	
Proposal 1d			

Several delegate groups I have worked with have decided that the real problem with community life is that members, formed to a monastic spirituality but working in jobs that make that spirituality impossible to live, blame themselves and others for their failure to meet unmeetable expectations. These delegates have chosen to focus on the issue of apostolic spirituality as a key to solving the problems in community life. In another group, however, delegates felt that the real problems in community life resulted from members who were assigned to a local community but who were unwilling to commit themselves to a vibrant community life. These delegates decided that the underlying issue, which affected many other aspects of the congregation as well as community living, was that of members' control over their own lives, and they decided to address the question of which decisions are appropriately made centrally and which can best be made by the individual.

CHAPTER TREATS CRITICAL QUESTIONS

It is my experience that a chapter can productively deal with three to five issues in addition to the mission statement. Although the delegates may originally name many more issues than that, I find that as they examine and discuss these items, they are almost always able to see that a small number of critical questions underlie them all, and these are the questions that are selected for chapter work.

I will not take the time here to describe the process used to consider these issues during the prechapter preparations and the chapter itself. I want to show with two brief points, however, how the issues are handled in coordination with the mission statement and the understanding of organizational theory that I presented earlier.

First, Figure 4 shows the relationship between the mission statement, the issues, and the specific legislation (usually called proposals) to be handled at the chapter. Because the issues all flow directly from the mission statement, and because the position taken by the chapter on each issue will be chosen for its capacity to enhance the living of the mission statement, the position taken on one issue cannot be contradictory to the position taken on another. Occasionally, two committees will take positions that are contradictory, but this will be spotted before the chapter, and the conflict is always resolved by referring back to the mission statement: which of these two positions is more consistent with the mission statement or will better enable us to become the people we've described in our mission statement? Once the position to be taken on each issue is clear, the committees develop proposals to ensure that these positions will not remain philosophical or abstract but will actually influence the functioning of the congregation.

The relationship between an issue and its supporting proposals will become more clear as I move on to my second point dealing with the coordination of the various aspects of the chapter. The model presented in Figure 1 comes into use again as each chapter committee begins to tackle its issue. There is a tendency for delegates (particularly the more practical ones who may have been frustrated by the abstractions of the mission statement concepts) to want to get right down to specifics. They need to restrain themselves just a bit longer, because they will be in danger of developing legislation without being clear about the direction the legislation is to take. I have found it

Figure 5

MISSION

In what direction do we need to move on this specific issue in order to help us become the kind of people we have described in our mission statement?

POWER

1. Who will be accountable for moving us in this direction? What is the responsibility of leadership? What is the responsibility of membership?

2. How do we need to approach this issue in order to help members be energized about it?

STRUCTURE

What structures do we need in order to implement this direction? What policies, procedures, programs, and changes in government structure?

RESOURCES

What resources can we put to the service of this direction, and how can we best focus them?
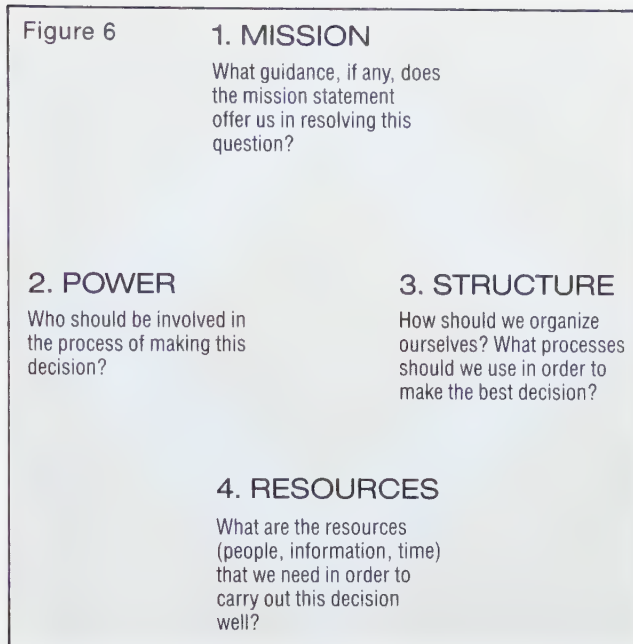
helpful for each committee to return to the model and ask the questions it presents, beginning with mission. Only when the mission and power questions have been answered should the committee move on to structure and resources, where the specific, practical questions will be addressed. Figure 5 illustrates this progression of questions.

The answers to the mission and power questions, once they are clarified, go into a brief directional paper, whereas the answers to the structure and resources questions come to the chapter as proposals. The use of the model by each committee, which guarantees the consistency of their issue with the mission statement, makes intercommittee conflict very uncommon.

Although it is not the purpose of this article to discuss chapter processes and organization, many people do ask about these once the method described here gives them a good approach for dealing with chapter content. I think the best resource for any congregation is the book *Chapters*, which was published several years ago by the Center for Planned Change. I understand that it is out of print now, but many groups have a copy in their libraries, and an administrator could probably easily find a copy to borrow. I think it is well worth the effort spent looking for it.

I want to close by outlining the questions that I suggest an administration ask itself in the process of making any significant congregational decision.

The mission statement provides the starting point for all decision making, but the diamond model also suggests the other questions that must be asked if the decision is to be made in an orderly,

Figure 6

1. MISSION
What guidance, if any, does the mission statement offer us in resolving this question?

2. POWER
Who should be involved in the process of making this decision?

3. STRUCTURE
How should we organize ourselves? What processes should we use in order to make the best decision?

4. RESOURCES
What are the resources (people, information, time) that we need in order to carry out this decision well?

effective way (Figure 6). I have found this tool to be simple to learn and yet very helpful to administrators, and even as it is helping them, it is guaranteeing that members, who have spent months in the development of a mission statement, will see that statement take its place as the dynamic focus of all congregational action.

The One-Way Road

JAMES TORRENS, S.J.

I

Where are you going, tiny one?
to school, though yet unspeaking

and pray, what do you think to learn?
the hardness of the road

so sleepy: have you been out long?
a life's long day

II

Mother, this carrying must pain.
I bore him joyously

how much goes with you of beloved home?
no shred

surely you will retrace these steps.
some other way, it's said

III

Young father, how your face is lined:
why not say finely drawn?

you will arrive somewhere some day?
he who is with us knows

what does he know, the little tired one?
where joy's begun

In an essay some years ago, I questioned whether university tenure is appropriate for members of a religious order. The assured future, the stable place—these concepts are not easy to harmonize with the spirit of detachment that should animate the taking of religious vows. Given the college employment picture, religious have no clear alternative; still, the discrepancy is troubling. I called my essay "An Untenured Being." The editor did not like or use this title, finding it perhaps metaphysically pretentious. But I continue to favor it, judging it faithful to the cumulative insight of our race that existence is at best precarious.

Only in this century, with the unimaginable advances of medical science and prolongation of life, have widespread systems of tenure arisen—in labor unions, in civil service, in the teaching profession. We perhaps feel ourselves planted more solidly than did our ancestors, our roots holding more tenaciously to earth. Modern people are quite mobile, of course; they feel less commitment to an old family home or homestead than their ancestors did. But modern families, even when on the move, do look forward to finding their ideal spot, their home place. The young are still by nature adventurous, itinerant; but maturing is still synonymous with settling, and this era of medical wonders gives us much more time to do so. The missionary, the one impelled to stay on the move with the burning gospel message, is as much countercultural today as ever.

The late twentieth century, with its institutions and broad suburban vistas, may sometimes seem unaging, but we are troubled by a high cloud that keeps passing over, the specter of the rootless ones, the refugees. They come with Anxiety writ large. Those dedicated counselors, social workers, and good neighbors, who get written off coolly as the "downstream rescuers," do find themselves exhausted by the prospect of their sheer numbers. Even those otherwise preoccupied can hardly ignore the hard-packed earth, tents, shacks, and vacant stares, all reminiscent of *The Grapes of Wrath*, which come daily via television from Lebanon and Jordan, Sudan, Somalia, Pakistan, Thailand, and Mexico where it touches Guatemala. Displaced fellow humans—we cannot begin to grasp the reality. The eyes ask, sometimes despairingly, "Who is my brother and sister?"

I have snapshots in my album from San Roque, a refugee camp on the outskirts of San Salvador, where the women, children, and old folks cram into an unfinished church and hall, with only a narrow alley around a wash trough to offer them open air. A few refugees once ventured beyond this enclosure and were never heard from again; security forces have been known to fire through a wall, just as a warning. The old story. My photo shows a very young sister in white habit within the crowd, a Salvadoran. We later heard that the camp personnel had been rounded up. I think of her, wondering about her fate. Contemplating these things, one cannot help but hear the refrain from *The Spiritual Exercises*, "What have I done for Christ? What

am I doing for Christ? What shall I do for Christ?"

The refugee is unmistakable in our midst, fleeing across the globe not just to arrive in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Miami, Houston, Toronto, and in Munich, Amsterdam, London, and Paris, but to scatter also in smaller, more uniform places. The migratory pattern presents a metaphor for our times. In the United States, the depression era found droves of people taking to the rails or fleeing the dust bowl in jalopies. The Beat Generation fed its restlessness into the autobiography of Jack Kerouac, *On the Road*. Things have not changed. Sitting recently at a lunch counter run by newcomer Vietnamese along the main street of San Jose, I was struck by how many drifters, with or without pack, went by. The streets of San Francisco have offered this spectacle for years. "Who are these people?" I find myself asking. They in their turn, inviting or challenging response, ask back, "And who are you?"

Are you a pilgrim yet? That is one form of the question. The Fathers at the Vatican Council, characterizing the Christian community as a pilgrim church, spoke more tellingly than perhaps they realized. The refugee, disconnected from place of origin and unsure of destination, or arriving at a destination hardly recognizable as home, is being wooed to a costly grace, is being asked, Why not turn wandering into pilgrimage? What if the refugee path were like the pilgrim routes of the Middle Ages? Though dangerous, these flowered with hostels and led to a singing fellowship. The air-conditioned tour bus has trouble recapturing this spirit, though it can. But those in flight or exile today, when given a warm welcome among their hosts or finding providential companions, may well produce their own version of the pilgrimage.

What is the essence of the pilgrim spirit, old and new? A Jesuit, remembering the rags and penury of Ignatius as he set off on his begging tours, may be forgiven, I hope, for answering that it is a dauntless faith in Providence, in the One leading us and arranging things against all appearances. We have seen such faith active among those most notable migrants and most determined pilgrims of history, the Jews, with their prayer of hope against hope: "Give us joy to balance our affliction, for the years when we knew misfortune" (Psalm 90). And consolation has come to them, despite all individual miseries, from a sense of belonging in a large migratory family on the way to the kingdom.

Who, in actual fact, is the refugee among us? The one whose culture makes it awkward to shake hands, or who talks much too loud and strangely in public, or who crowds with numerous relations into cramped quarters, or who cannot get the hang of modern appliances. But also he or she is Jesus, not in the famous guise of "the man for others" but in the more unsettling guise of the actual other, the foreigner. French Catholic bishops, recently ad-

dressing the immigrants who have come en masse into that country, acknowledged to them the "threat of intolerance, of racism" they have to face. Actual violence, they said, is blocking the efforts of these newcomers to live with others. The bishops told them, "You are the representatives among us of the great diversity of the family of God. The testimony of your presence is essential to us."

The testimony of the shouldering of the cross is part of that essential presence. Immigrants lining up or sitting for hours at the Immigration and Naturalization Service office with the likelihood of curt treatment; parents watching a gap widen between themselves and their children and longing for their old home ground ("mi rancho," "mi pueblo," as the Mexicans say); escapees remembering those who were not so lucky—this causes sorrow verging often on desperation. Even a halfway friend, a slight spark of comprehension—any lift along the *via crucis*—becomes invaluable.

Some believers these days, cherishing the Infancy narratives of St. Matthew and St. Luke, are disturbed to hear scripture scholars question whether Jesus and his parents literally did flee to Egypt. But so what if the flight was not a literal one? In that case scriptural inspiration, the breath of the Holy Spirit infusing the process of composition, would be all the more evident. What could be more brilliant, more Christian, than the realization of how fully, from the beginning, Jesus identified himself with the outcast, the one in flight through the world? A strange logic was at work from the start, saying that our Savior and his parents had to be excluded, hounded away, so as to return to a promised condition by the hard road: "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

Our Gospels, which begin with the arrival of the Magi and the flight of the holy family, lead, upon their closure, into a supplement, the missionary "Acts" of the apostles, those zealous travels among unsympathetic people by the most hazardous means. Paul was a model for Ignatius Loyola in this matter of mission, or Christian apostolate. Father Jeronimo Nadal, whom Ignatius chose as interpreter of his mind and of the Jesuit Constitutions, emphasized the Pauline mobility as being of more importance to the Society than even setting down foundations. He told some Spanish Jesuits, "In the Society there are different kinds of house or dwelling. These are: the house of probation, the college, the professed house, and the journey [in Latin, *peregrinatio*]—and by this last the whole world becomes our house."

The missionary calling has instigated many orders and congregations and groups of diocesan priests and lay volunteers to embrace work "of the greatest difficulty, labor, and danger." This work, "the care of those for whom nobody is caring" (still in the words of Father Nadal), has meant "being constantly on the move," having "no place to call

one's own, . . . whether we are sent to idolaters, to Mohammedans, to heretics, or to Christians who are perishing or in danger because of a lack of ministers." Today, at home as well as afar, those striving to be apostolic Christians are called out of themselves to a new kind of discipline, a difficult fellowship, an unsettling peace. Home turns into a less sure place, and the heavenly state becomes more actual as a goal.

Also, if we think of the Jews' pilgrimage along the Sacred Way from bondage back to the Holy Land, and if we share the psalmist's vision of dry ground suddenly brimming with springs, we recognize as our pilgrim task the blessing of the earth. Often on behalf of fellow pilgrims we need to say, "Such and such policies or conditions constitute bondage. Let's change this or that in a fundamental way." Many have had to leave their countries for saying, or intimating, precisely that. Many others, perhaps far more, have had no choice but to flee before worsening conditions. Of all such wayfarers attempting to be pilgrims, concerned with the miseries and sharing the hopes of their fellow passengers, longing intensely for the kingdom to burst forth—of all such the gospel has proclaimed, "Blessed are you."

A Celibate's Relationship With God

GEORGE A. ASCHENBRENNER, S.J.

Although it has been claimed, in *Time* magazine (April 9, 1984) and elsewhere, that the sexual revolution has died down and that some traditional moral values are reentering the sexual consciousness and behavior of more and more people, religious celibacy nonetheless continues to be misunderstood, feared, and at times ridiculed. The British counselor Alex Comfort's book *The Joy of Sex* perched atop the bestseller lists for months, but more recently Gabrielle Brown's *The New Celibacy* claims to have found a new breed of celibates, both single and married, who have temporarily desisted from sexual involvement for a wide variety of reasons. But regardless of the success of secular experiments with celibacy, a celibacy that is religiously motivated in an experience of God can hardly be called popular today.

I am aware that in *A Life of Promise* Francis Moloney strongly cautions against substituting the word *celibacy* for the traditional term *chastity*. His point is that celibacy is a physical state, whereas chastity is a Christian virtue that can be fostered over time. According to this line of reasoning, I should be using the expression *celibate chastity*; however, even though the dictionary defines celibacy as a physical state, I think that for most people the contemporary meaning of the word is not so strictly limited. Consequently, I will use the term *celibacy* to signify the virtue of a celibate chastity that is as lively in development and growth as life itself is.

It is vital to affirm the vocation and value of religious celibacy, not as something easy that requires no sacrifice, but as a way of joy and love energized by God through religious community and ministry. It is a way of living that can be spiritually challenging and psychologically healthy. The adventure of a healthy celibate life is always the integration of its sexual challenge with a profoundly intimate and lively spiritual life. My central focus here, however, is not the sexual dimension of celibacy but the delicate and decisive balance that religious celibacy must achieve between the following three essential relationships: a distinctive companionship with God, a life and faith shared in religious community, and a ministry shared with many other people.

TOWARD A DESCRIPTIVE DEFINITION

As a mystery in faith whereby God attracts men and women to a particular experience and style of life, celibacy defies any final scientific definition; in fact, it is impossible even to begin to comprehend it without faith. Karl Rahner, in *Servants of the Lord*, calls it "part of a theology on its knees, at prayer." He further observes that "it is odd how we always speak of celibacy in general. . . . To take refuge in generalities about such a subject is misguided, dangerous, and self-defeating. . . . You and I must ultimately ask not 'What of celibacy *in itself?*' but 'Where does *my* celibacy stand?' "

What follows is an attempt to express something

of my own personal experience of celibacy. It is meant to be an invitation to readers to reflect prayerfully on their own celibate experience. This is not to presume that my experience or anyone else's by itself is definitive of religious celibacy. Though our reflections can and should be personal and experiential, we must remember also to keep them within the long development of the Catholic Christian tradition of religious celibacy.

By synthesizing elements of truth from many different statements, I will formulate a description that moves from negation to affirmation and from a simpler to a more refined and careful articulation of the truth of religious celibacy. The simplest view is the one held by many ordinary people with little theological, spiritual, or canonical sophistication: that celibacy is a matter of not having a husband or a wife. Though this view is somewhat superficial and negative, there is obviously truth in it. It would, however, be more precise to say that celibacy is the forgoing of all genital sexual expression in the basic threefold sexual relationship we all have with ourselves, with members of the same sex, and with members of the opposite sex. But defining religious celibacy as the negation of specific external actions is unsatisfying and fails to catch its attraction and power. Nonetheless, even this early, superficial stage of definition can provoke some interesting questions and insights. Some would claim that renouncing children is a greater sacrifice for women than for men. A woman religious who is a friend of mine believes this to be so, and wonders whether much of this sacrificial value is now being lost on young women who, unduly influenced by our culture's stress on self-protective comfort, do not have the raising of a family as a serious goal. If the object of the sacrifice is not strongly desired, the cost and value of the sacrifice decrease.

ATTITUDE TOWARD REALITY

We may now take our initial definition a step farther and describe celibacy as the choice not to have a marital partner. In its more profound sense, beyond the renunciation of any specific man or woman as husband or wife, this choice implies an attitude of special presence and relationship to all reality, in which one relates to nobody and to nothing as one would to a husband or wife. Keith Clark, in *An Experience of Celibacy*, explains that the celibate does not belong to nor is owned by anybody or anything as husbands and wives belong to and own one another in the beautiful intimacy of Christian marriage.

On a more positive note, we can talk of celibacy as the experience of discovering one's heart to be, in the words of Peter van Breeman, "unmarriageable for God's sake." This brings us much c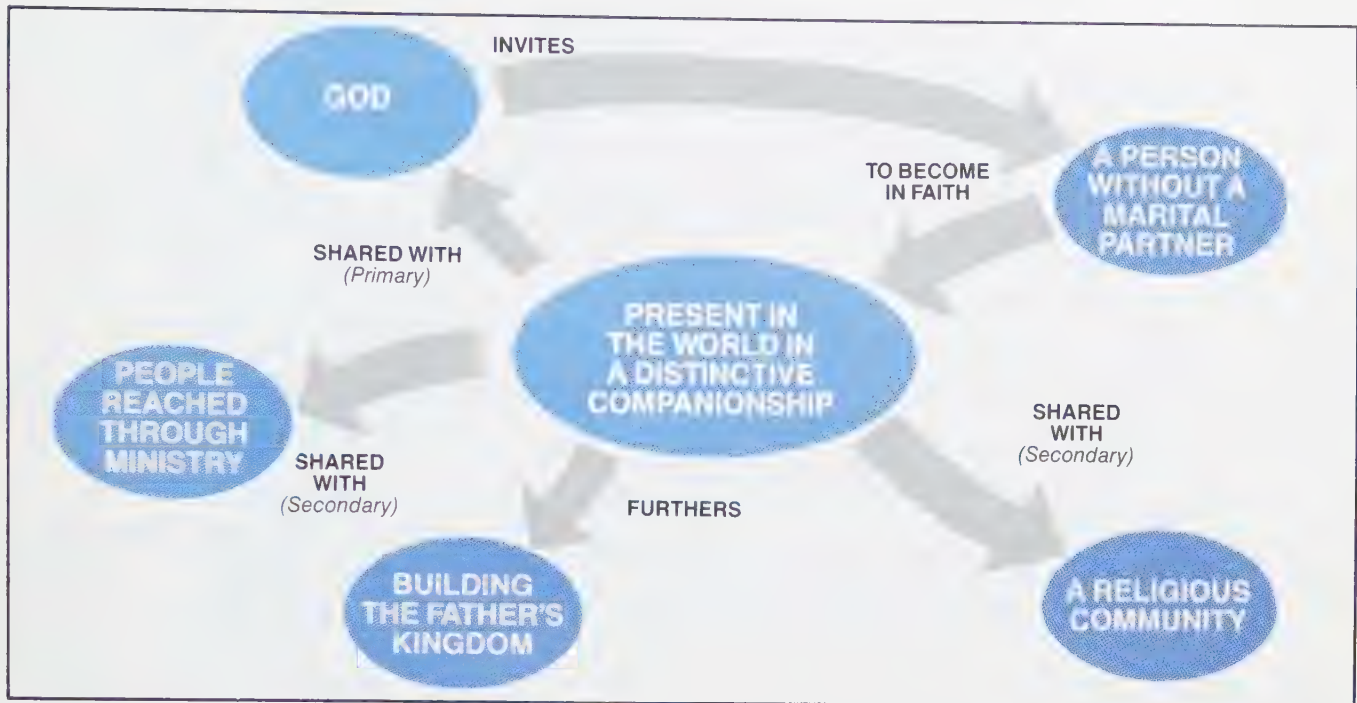loser to the heart of the matter. To be unmarriageable here is not seen as a curse or a failure. In fact, a human being must first grow to a mature sense of responsibility and marriageability before the realization gradually dawns that he or she is actually becoming unmarriageable. Van Breeman puts it well in *Called by Name:* "Celibacy does not mean that one has lost something, but rather that the celibate has found Someone."

Celibacy, therefore, is the only fitting human response to a specific kind of companionship offered by God. As the religious experience of men and women develops a distinctive quality of intimacy and attractive aliveness, they feel themselves seduced into such an abandonment to this companionship with a dearly loving God that they cannot also take upon themselves the abandonment and union involved in a marital relationship with another human being. In and through all the loves in their lives, they have come upon a Love that transcends and surpasses all the others, and they sense their hearts expanding and filling with that Love. This is not to claim that the experience of God found in celibacy is better, more thorough, more intimate, or more holy than that found in marriage, but rather that the celibate person's experience of God is different in contour and destiny from that of the married person. So understood, celibacy is rooted in a person's religious experience of the awesome attractiveness and thorough invitation of God's love.

FOUNDATION TAKES YEARS

This kind of religious experience does not suddenly erupt; it develops over years. Formation personnel must learn to recognize the signs of this development that are requisite for first commitment and those that are requisite for final profession years later. Along the course of this development, there will be privileged moments of insight into and recognition of the celibate companionship and vocation that are being offered. Only through prayerful discernment and careful experimentation with commitment to the vocation revealed in such an experience of God can one's heart finally come to the inner confirming exclamation: I can do no other!

Only a distinctive religious experience of God can lay a foundation that will be profound and permanent enough for a life of religious celibacy. Any attempt to justify or explain this celibacy simply in terms either of a shared life and faith or of a response to the sorry state of our world today is doomed to failure. The soundings for celibate identity must run so clear and deep as to touch the very being and love of God. Though there are always many factors contributing to the growth of a vocation, only the infinite beauty of God, who is more in love with us than we are with ourselves, can fascinate a human heart to celibacy. When candi-

Diagram labels:

GOD — INVITES — **A PERSON WITHOUT A MARITAL PARTNER**

TO BECOME IN FAITH

SHARED WITH (Primary)

PRESENT IN THE WORLD IN A DISTINCTIVE COMPANIONSHIP

PEOPLE REACHED THROUGH MINISTRY

SHARED WITH (Secondary)

SHARED WITH (Secondary)

FURTHERS

BUILDING THE FATHER'S KINGDOM

A RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY

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dates for a celibate vocation say that they are motivated by a desire to serve this world and its people, formation personnel must help them to find behind and beyond this valuable motivation the distinctive quality of religious experience that gradually becomes a clear call to a celibate relationship with God.

Honest, prayerful reflection is more necessary for the development of a celibate vocation than superhuman psychic strength. I have been involved more than once in a discussion about whether celibacy demands a greater inner psychic strength than married life does. Obviously, the psychological vigor that results from healthy self-acceptance and self-love is needed for all happy, mature celibate living. But since this vigor is needed for any mature human life, it is a mistake to make a simple equation between a vocation to celibacy and greater inner strength. A truer way of discovering a celibate vocation is to reflect seriously and prayerfully on the whole range of one's social relationships. This variety of experience of love, intimacy, and other human sharings will inevitably lead certain people away from focusing on a future marital relationship and set their hearts' sights on God's love in the growing desire to be owned by that love alone. In the end, it is this distinctive companionship with God alone that makes celibacy genuinely religious and adds to a celibate life-style the possibility of fidelity.

A THREEFOLD RELATIONSHIP

By synthesizing many of the insights already mentioned and adding a new and very important perspective, we may arrive at a final definition of religious celibacy as the human presence of someone who lives without a marital partner in response to God's invitation to a distinctive companionship that is shared in religious community and helps to further the Kingdom of Jesus' Father in human hearts.

This definition needs further explication. Celibacy is not simply a negation, or the performance of certain external actions, or an inner attitude, or a private, religious experience; rather, it is a specific human presence in the world. This presence is only possible as the result of an essential threefold relationship that comprises a relationship of distinctive companionship in faith with God, a relationship of shared life and faith in religious community, and a relationship in ministry with many other people. It is not possible to choose one or two of these relationships: all three are required and offered in a celibate vocation.

Although these relationships are all necessary to the contemporary understanding and living of celibacy, there is a clear hierarchy of importance. Celibate identity must strike deeper than the necessary involvement in religious community and in ministry. It must reach to the very heart of an experience of God in a special companionship. To upset this primacy, to try to sink the roots of celibate identity primarily in community or in ministry, can lead to the serious misunderstandings that I will examine later.

We have long been familiar with these three relationships, but we have not always recognized or honored their interdependence, which I believe is crucial for happy celibate living. In daily living,

celibacy has often been interpreted simply as a special relationship with God. Whenever some problem with celibacy arose, in the end the solution was always to pray more and relate better to God. It was presumed that the fault lay in the celibate's relationship with God. But when celibacy is viewed in terms of a threefold essential relationship, it is clear that some problems must be solved by readjusting our community or ministerial involvement, not our involvement with God in prayer. Let there be no misunderstanding: a profoundly personal involvement with God in prayer is absolutely critical for effective celibate living. But such a prayer relationship with God, essential as it is, is not enough. Whether the life of a celibate will be characterized by frustrating tension and strain or peaceful energy and intensity depends upon the carefully discerned integration and balance of these three relationships. This integration does not come automatically and completely with prayer: it must also be sought in human relationships both in community and in ministry. Nor is this integration something static that can be preserved everlastingly, once found. Rather, it is a dynamic reality that shifts and develops from phase to phase of a person's life. Thus, the challenge for the adult celibate is to find and live the proper integration that will balance the potential tension of these three relationships with an energetic peace and an enthusiastic joy.

RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

The most important aspect of this essential threefold relationship is that distinctive companionship initiated by the mysterious workings of God's love in a person's heart, to which, finally, the only appropriate response is a celibate life-style and presence. A profoundly personal and intimate solitude, a standing alone in and with God, is at the very heart of celibate existence. This aloneness with God is always a gift; it can never be the result of human effort. It is, however, a gift that the celibate must learn to receive and cooperate with. At times this aloneness calms and focuses one's center of consciousness and expands one's heart in intimacy; at other times, it is a loneliness that shrivels the heart and rattles the bones. Nevertheless, in faith it is always a power to transform and poise a heart in self-oblative love toward the Other and all the others.

Modern American culture in many ways militates against the experience of aloneness. Without denying the need for supportive friendships of all sorts, the celibate does in some sense stand alone in this world. The companionship in which this aloneness is rooted is lived in the darkness of faith and the enthusiasm of hope; there is no hand to hold, no eyes to gaze into, no lips to kiss. But it is a compassionate companionship of such intimacy

"Celibacy does not mean that one has lost something, but rather that the celibate has found Someone"

in faith that it can promise the human heart more than anything else in this world ever could: fulfillment of our deepest and truest longings. The profound faith and patient hope required for such celibate companionship with and in God will always be challenged, even ridiculed, by an exaggerated stress on the importance of sensual feeling. To stand alone seems freakish in a culture obsessed with the sensual and the sexual. Celibate existence will always be countercultural in the face of such an immature attitude, and it will seem just as countercultural in any church or religious group influenced by this attitude. Nevertheless, though it is true that infatuation with sensual feelings can distract one from the call to profound faith, celibates are not bound to scorn and flee the sensual but rather are invited to discover, develop, and live their sensuality in an appropriate way in relationships with God and with many other people.

The aloneness of celibate existence with and in God is a necessary witness to the whole human family, for it symbolizes something fundamental to the human condition. Henri Nouwen has referred to celibacy as "an emptiness for God." At the center of every human heart there is a space, an emptiness available to no one besides that unique human being and the God whose love is creatively holding that person in being. This emptiness is truly for God. To gradually discover, accept, and live out of this center is the maturity of human and spiritual identity. Some men and women, as they experience this core celibacy more and more fully in their hearts, hear a call to express it in a life-style of religious celibacy within the church. Detached from the core celibacy, this life-style would become superficial, showy, and rootless. It is for this reason that Nouwen maintains, in *Clowning in Rome*, that "we will never fully understand what it means to be celibate unless we recognize that celibacy is, first of all, an element and even an essential element in the life of all Christians." The celibate life-style reminds all of us that the human heart by its nature contains an emptiness that in-

Different Spirituality Required

HIS HERS   MINE
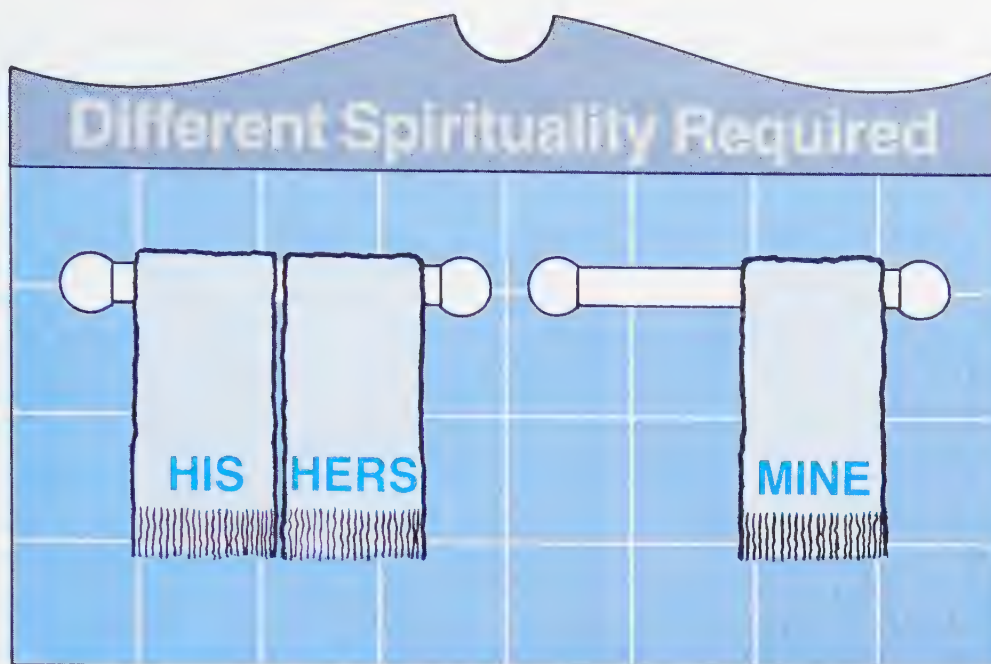
vites solitude. Celibacy stakes a claim in the heart at a depth that is available only to our creatively loving God. "Thus," says Nouwen, "in a world torn by loneliness and conflict and trying so hard to create better human relationships, celibacy is a very important witness. It encourages us to create space for him who sent his son, thus revealing to us that we can only love each other because he has loved us first."

The affective renunciation of the possibility of having a husband or a wife, when properly understood, enhances the meaning and witness of celibacy as a unique relationship with God. But this renunciation must be something much more than a mere negation, for a simple denial could never be sufficient motivation for the human heart. The renunciation must cut deeply enough to amount to a re-annunciation of the celibate person's whole identity. Celibates proclaim their core identity to be thoroughly and carefully centered in God. Celibate disengagement from a spouse announces a profound and intimate engagement in faith with the awesome mystery of a loving God.

DISENGAGEMENT BECOMES CREATIVE

The disengagement that I am speaking of reflects the Calvary disengagement of Jesus, which was a deathly disengagement from life, difficult, yet freely chosen in such a way as to witness unequivocally to his lively and thorough engagement with the one he called "my dear Father." And his Father blessed that disengagement with a fullness of life and love in resurrection. As Sandra Schneiders has persuasively argued in *Sisters Today* (December 1969), the deathly disengagement of Jesus and of the celibate is creative—creative of a Kingdom

fullness, to be looked for in hope now, and to be lived in joy finally. Thus, celibate disengagement not only bespeaks a special engagement with God on the part of the celibate person, but also announces to all Christians that their identity, however necessarily and intricately involved it is with this world, finally is not of this world, but is fulfilled in that fascinating and mysterious Father of Jesus whose Spirit throbs in all our hearts. As Schneiders points out, however, celibacy can only be creative if "such a disengagement, such an engagement with God . . . is completely, authentically, generously, and unselfconsciously lived."

Most authentic, unselfconscious living of celibacy is born of responsible dealing with loneliness. The uniqueness of each individual person makes loneliness an inescapable part of the human condition. Celibacy, because of its disengagement and affective renunciation (surely never meant to be a renunciation of all affectivity!), often brings in its wake a distinctive type of emptiness and loneliness with great potential for fostering the development of a mature self-possession and a richly intimate life with self, with others, and with God. If this loneliness is not properly controlled, however, it tends to fragment us, leaving us with an anguished sense of alienation from everyone, and becoming a desolation destructive of our relationship with our true self, with others, and with God.

On the other hand, when celibate loneliness is faced and dealt with, it becomes productive and enriching. Though there are similarities between biting loneliness and confident aloneness, they are outweighed by the differences. Instead of fragmenting, aloneness, as the word itself suggests, has the sense of being "all one." It is the centered wholeness of humble self-possession carefully poised for service. Unless people spend enough

time alone, it is hard for them to be really at home with themselves, to have that basic comfort with themselves that makes possible true maturity and responsible generosity.

SOLITUDE CENTERS EXISTENCE

Recognizing both the distinction and the relationship between loneliness and aloneness is an important aid to living a celibate identity. It is precisely the affective renunciation of marriage and the careful dealing with the resulting emptiness that make possible an ever deeper development of that contemplative solitude all alone with and in God—the center of celibate existence. But this productive dealing with loneliness is more easily described than accomplished. Instead of suffocating in the clutches of loneliness or repressively denying its existence, we must learn to be present in the loneliness in such a way as to be able to recognize within the emptiness a call to renew our celibate identity in the intimacy of solitude, alone with God as the Beloved of our heart. To face the loneliness, to accept it as part of life, and yet to avoid being mastered by it by transforming it into a renewal of celibate identity usually involves the use of specific practical tactics that are as varied as the people who make use of them: a wrestled act of adoration in the flickering darkness of a chapel, the exuberant exhaustion of physical exercise and hard work, the pleasant enjoyment of music and reading, or the heavenly delight of time with a friend. There are many other possible tactics, but in all the variety, the choice and the motivation are the same: to decide against the destructive loneliness, by hearing within its depth the renewed invitation to find one's truest self, with all one's powers poised for service, alone in God's love. This ability to deal with loneliness so as to transform it into celibate solitude in God is obviously an important sign of a celibate vocation during the early stages of religious formation.

FOR COMPOSURE OF CONSCIOUSNESS

A celibate vocation should also involve the development of a genuine theology and spirituality of "my room" and "my bed." This is quite different from the marital theology and spirituality of "our room" and "our bed." Most men and women don't usually sit alone in their room or go to bed alone. The celibate, however, retires alone at night and arises alone in the morning, and during waking hours spends a great deal of time alone in a room, either preparing for or debriefing ministry. It is often in the celibate's own room and bed that nagging loneliness can tempt the soul and sap enthusiasm. A theology and spirituality of my room and bed must be realistic enough not to delude the celibate into thinking that future loneliness can be prevented, and it must be profound enough to help the celibate transform this ordinary loneliness into a contemplatively relaxed and intimate solitude with God in love. To be profound and realistic, such a theology and spirituality must be manifested in this world—even in things as seemingly minor as the arrangement of one's room. Of course, something as personal as the decor of one's room will vary from individual to individual; yet, when it succeeds, it will help one to find a composure of consciousness focused not on self but on the fascinating beauty of God experienced here in one's room as the Beloved of one's celibate heart. In so describing one's room, I do not mean that it should be a fortress to protect the celibate from community or a place for selfish indulgence. It need not even be the space within four walls and floor and ceiling. A theology and spirituality of my room and my bed can also be developed when one is forced by circumstances to share a room with others, because, finally, it is a composure of consciousness that focuses the affectivity of one's heart so thoroughly in the intimacy of God's love that one is poised in freedom for service and relationship with anyone anywhere.

Obviously, this kind of theology and spirituality is not automatically acquired: it must be intentionally developed through hard work over years. If it has not been developed, then celibate living will be more haphazard and less joyous and intimate than it could be, both with God and with others. Certainly part of the hard work involved in forming the theology and spirituality of my room and my bed is the faithful practice of daily contemplation. Without it, a human heart cannot know, and surely cannot persist in, the developing and distinctive companionship with God that I have described here as the very heart of a vocation to religious celibacy. Without this enduring contemplative involvement with God, it is hard to see how a person's celibate relationship with God can energize him or her for selflessly free and lovingly enthusiastic service of others.

Editor's note: In our next issue, Fr. Aschenbrenner will discuss celibacy in relation to community and ministry.

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Counseling by Letter

ANGELA MACNAMARA

Counseling someone by letter—people told me it couldn't be done. What would the counselor do without the possibility of watching for the body language of the client? How could the counselor recognize the extent to which the client was censoring what he or she wrote? Spontaneity and emotion could be censored out. There would be no opportunity for rich, telling silences and no opportunity to weigh up the hundreds of little signs that fill in so much when one is sharing face-to-face.

Certainly, letter counseling has a different emphasis. Yet, having kept a journal for years, I knew that there are things that one can put down on paper that one might well withhold in the face-to-face situation. So very much can happen when we write. Anne Frank, the young girl who kept a journal while in hiding from the Nazis in Amsterdam, wrote about one of the values of journal keeping: "I can shake off everything if I write; my sorrows disappear, my courage is re-born." I can identify with this statement, and I believe others can also. Through my journal I made it more possible to confront myself, even to effect some healing in myself. So, I decided, counseling by letter is not only possible, it is an exciting extension of counseling as we know it, with some advantages and some new possibilities.

As a counselor, I was running a problem page in a Sunday newspaper and so had many opportunities for practising and learning more about my new-found art of letter counseling. Here in Ireland we have a dearth of counselors (person-to-person), though the situation has somewhat improved over the twenty years of my involvement in this work. Added to that, I discovered that in a significant number of cases people in small towns are intimidated by the one or two local marriage counselors whom they might know socially or who might be looked upon as "big" people in the town or village. Counseling being so new to many people, there is a certain amount of fear of lack of confidentiality. Often, the parish priest is considered to be the local counselor (whether or not he is trained as such), and it is not always easy, socially, to approach him. Perhaps people feel too inarticulate, too ashamed, or even too proud to confide in such a well-known local authority figure. Some write to me, saying, "If I were seen going up to the parochial house, word would be around in no time, and people would be wondering what my special visit there might be about." Thus, through letters from countless troubled people, I learned there is a great vacuum where there should be counseling.

In quite a number of letters, people seek information about social services, addresses of clubs, organizations, work possibilities, etc. At first glance, these seem to require simple factual information. In such ways, people start by sounding out the counselor.

One of the first rules of letter counseling is to read the client's letter very carefully, listening to what is being said and reading between the lines to look for the feelings that are coming through.

We note the client's handwriting, the notepaper, the repetition of certain words, an air of apology or self-confidence. An example of a first letter that is just a feeler would be one in which a mother writes, "I am desperately in need of a social club for my seventeen-year-old daughter who doesn't mix much. Please give me the address of a good club." The counselor notes that the mother writes agitatedly, and for a *seventeen*-year-old girl, and that she uses the word "desperately." The counselor wonders why the girl isn't mixing socially, and whether or not the girl herself might be concerned about her way of life. Possibly, the anxiety resides simply in the mother's perception of her quiet daughter.

In responding, the counselor may choose not to challenge the mother with these wonderings, which might seem intrusive or threatening. Instead, the counselor might express her understanding of the mother's wish to see her daughter have more friends, suggest a few clubs that the girl might like to investigate, perhaps ask if the girl might like to join a special hobby or craft class. "Perhaps Mary would like to write to me herself and tell me of any special interest or talent she might like to develop further." The counselor could add that Mary may be quite happy with a relatively quiet life, but that it is wise of the mother to let her daughter know what is available locally. If the area is isolated, the question of transportation to and from the club may be brought up.

Thus the possibility is quietly opened for further confidences from the mother, whom the counselor senses may need to share the agitation that came through in the first letter. It is also tentatively suggested that Mary herself might like to write. The counselor takes care not to delve in any way that might be inappropriate, curious, or outside the bounds suggested by the client's letter. Suggestions such as "Do write again if you have other troubles" may make the client feel that she has revealed more than she wanted to, and she could be made to feel unhappily vulnerable. It is also important for the busy counselor not to invite more than he or she may be able to cope with. The Irish have the "gift of the gab" in their capacity for letter writing as in their story telling!

When a client opens his or her heart emotionally, the counselor needs to underline the confidentiality that exists and to show sincere gratitude for the sharing. The counselor can make the client feel less vulnerable by saying, "I can understand the relief you must have felt in putting it all down on paper. I guess that some days seem worse than other days." Then the counselor could replay to the client the feelings he or she has expressed, clarifying tentatively. For example, the counselor could write, "Am I right in imagining that this worry has been there for years but is worse lately, and is particularly bad in the mornings?" or "You tell me

that sometimes you feel that you have forgiven the hurt and other times not. You express that so well. It is so humanly understandable. . . . "

I believe that the counselor must write from the heart, avoiding jargon and keeping in mind the need to retain appropriate and prudent distance. Accurate empathy ensures this. Counselors who really know themselves and know the business of counseling don't have to hide behind words.

If a client has proposed a way out of his or her problem, whether the solution be realistic or suicidal, it is important that the counselor pick up the proposal with appropriate reaction. "I think I can understand your feeling that things would be eased if you no longer lived to face them, but I was so pleased to note your courage in another part of your letter, where you said. . . . " Then the courageous suggestion the client may have made can be gently expanded. The counselor can comment on how open and interesting he or she showed himself or herself to be and can pick out all positive and hopeful signs and replay them. Often, the writer is presenting an example of fortitude in the midst of great trials, and should be told this. Positive reinforcement and encouragement is most supportive to the client.

Since the client and the counselor are committing themselves to paper, there will be no opportunity for erasing the edges of a sharp comment that might be softened or explained face-to-face. Thus, the counselor needs great foresight and sensitivity. There may appear to be no "tone of voice" available in the written word, but experience teaches that we do indeed "hear" one another through our letters. For example, one client wrote, "I haven't talked to this neighbor for six years, and I won't." The counselor responded, "You are a determined sort of person and you have been hurt. Sometimes when I myself am hurt I dig my heels in, and it takes a while before I am able to use both my head and my heart in working out what may be the truly best thing to do. But if I go on not using my head and heart I begin to feel sick about the situation. I guess you will understand this sort of reaction. . . . You seem to be so warm-hearted when later in your letter you tell me of your care for your mother-in-law. . . . " In her response to that letter, the client wrote, "Yes, I can be tough, but I'm not really tough deep down, just hurt. Maybe now I could. . . . " The counselor now had a new situation to work on.

One element that has always been of vital importance to me in this ministry is prayer. Before the day's work on letters, I open myself to the Lord and present to him all those people whom I hope he will respond to through me. I ask for the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in my work.

I could go on and on about the fascinating apostolate of letter counseling. Has such correspondence been a success over the twenty years of my

experience? I would say definitely, "yes." That doesn't mean that I consider myself as having always intuited correctly or responded with the right degree of empathy. But I have really cared and really listened, and people have known this and responded to it.

Many people conclude their letters by saying, "I feel so much better for having written it all down," "It's such a weight off my mind," "I can think more clearly now," or "Thank you for being there and listening." That listening is done with the mind and the heart. Many people have a great gift for expressing their inner selves on paper; they explore and weep and celebrate in their wonderful letters. It is always a privilege to be there for them. They have taught me so much.

ANGELA MACNAMARA'S GUIDELINES FOR COUNSELING BY LETTER

1. Read the letter very carefully; however brief it is, there is a thinking, feeling person behind it.

2. Note inconsistencies. Jot down your own reactions.

3. Pick up the emotional as well as intellectual content of the letter.

4. Accept clients as they were at the moment they wrote, without question.

5. Do not exhibit confusion, e.g., "It's terribly difficult for me to know what to say." What the client needs is clarification.

6. Be nonjudgmental. We have no right to judge the client or anyone he or she writes about.

7. Limit advice giving to facts, e.g., acquainting the client with services. Never say "If I were you I would. . . "

8. The client must feel your genuine interest in him or her as a lovable person.

9. Avoid the use of language that might not be understandable to the client.

10. Respect the client's right to make his or her own choices and decisions. Endeavor to activate the client's potential for self-direction.

11. Reassure clients about your commitment to confidentiality.

12. Avoid excessive emotional involvement. Aim to help clients become self-sufficient.

13. Don't offer undue or premature reassurance, such as, "Everything will be fine." It may not!

14. Don't be afraid to convey the "ordinariness" of yourself, e.g, "I knew just what you meant when you described how tired you were and impatient with the children; I get like that too. Perhaps we should. . . "

15. A high level of accurate empathy gets the message across to the client that "she (he) really knows what I'm talking about."

BOOK REVIEW

Dementia, by Leonard L. Heston, M.D., and June White. New York and San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Company, 1983. 163 pp. $9.95.

The Thirty-Six Hour Day, by Nancy L. Mace and Peter V. Rabins, M.D. New York: Warner Books, 1984. 356 pages. $3.95.

"The graying of America" rightly draws our attention and our admiration. We know that ninety-five percent of the people over sixty-five years of age are able physically and mentally to live independently. We know that they have often been the victims of neglect from our youth-oriented culture. We applaud the efforts of such groups as Maggie Kuhn's Gray Panthers to redress the inequities. And whatever our views of his politics or his administration, the survival of Ronald Reagan as a septuagenarian president should reassure us that older persons can indeed shoulder positions of responsibility.

Unhappily, not all survive so well. And of all the ills and difficulties that can come to old age, few are dreaded more than senility, the loss of control of one's mental processes and orientations. Here are two helpful books. Dr. Leonard Heston and June White's *Dementia*, subtitled *A Practical Guide to Alzheimer's Disease and Related Illnesses*, brings us an overview by personnel from the University of Minnesota Hospital and affiliated facilities. Nancy Mace and Dr. Peter Rabins's book, subtitled *A Family Guide to Caring for Persons With Alzheimer's Disease, Related Dementing Illnesses, and Memory Loss in Later Life* is a paperback issue of a

hardcover volume printed in 1981 by the Johns Hopkins University Press.

Both cover much of the same ground and both are practical, but in different ways. Reading Heston and White's book may give you the feeling of being at a conference on Alzheimer's disease at the University Hospital; reading Mace and Rabins's book may give you the feeling that an enormously helpful person has come to your house to ease your burdens. Both books are worth reading.

Alzheimer Type Senile Dementia, as it is now termed, is the category that describes the most severely debilitating irreversible loss of mental capacities. It almost invariably commences with short-term memory impairment. A person suffering from this disease can remember who some of their grade school teachers were but not what they had for breakfast or whether or not they had breakfast. It is generally joined by impairment of logical and social judgment: social situations or new persons cannot be processed with their former poise. Communication skills may be kept longer in terms of fluent articulation, but examination will reveal poverty and vagueness of thought: "*What* is he saying?" Precious little that one can grasp hold of. Emotions can be uninhibited, with bursts of irritability, suspicion, accusation, paranoia, or anger, or they can be turned inward, resulting in detachment, withdrawal, and depression. Progression of the disease can lead to a condition in which a parent will not recognize a child and where all communication effectively ceases. Not the storybook ending for a human life: heartbreaking for the patient (up to a certain time) and heartbreaking for the family and care givers.

Points for hope: Severe loss of memory, much less dementia, is *not* inevitable with advancing years. The majority of persons of both sexes are not impaired, right up to the nineties. *Benign senescent forgetfulness* (what a lovely phrase!) is common, a result of the decreasing reserve capacity of our brains, but not necessarily incapacitating, especially when it is limited to certain areas. Some apparent "dementia" is pseudodementia. At our Geriatric Psychiatry Clinic at Georgetown we see a number of cases in which a depression is masquerading as dementia or at least complicating it to a severity that can be lightened with appropriate antidepressant therapy. The bad news is that currently we have no effective treatment for the Alzheimer Type Senile Dementia. Strictly speaking, the diagnosis can only be made by post-mortem identification of the neurofibrillary tangles and plaques. For practical purposes, progressive incapacitation in the patient will determine the working diagnosis. Every person who is under consideration for the diagnosis deserves a careful

workup by a physician familiar with geriatric medicine, to rule out alternatives and to counsel the care giver.

In these cases, even more than in other chronic and terminal illnesses, there is not just one patient: the whole family, and particularly the immediate care givers, are deeply affected. The title *The Thirty-Six Hour Day* is an eloquent statement of the pressures families can feel. A person with a severe case of Alzheimer's disease will need constant attention. Living an existence without the benefit of the time markers of memory, they may go from moment to moment, oblivious of whether the stove burners are lighted, the water taps turned on, or a lighted cigarette placed down in a vulnerable spot, or of where they are or why they haven't eaten breakfast (when it may be two A.M., or they may have left the breakfast table thirty minutes ago). Attention must be paid—continuous attention—and yet the rest of the family life must go on. It can be a dreadful and exhausting existence.

Both books are helpful, Mace and Rabins's especially so, with its constant advice to the care givers. They urge the reader to simplify—the household, the routines, the patient's surroundings, instructions; to get help, to be aggressive and persistent in pursuing potential allies and helpers; to know their own limits and to respect them (everyone, *even you*, needs time away); and, if the situation indicates, to take steps for institutionalization, without guilt. Both books give excellent overviews of the fields of dementia, the major areas of research and their as yet limited prospects, coexisting or complicating medical problems, some hints for financial management, and some hints for seeking placement care.

Both books are useful and, I suggest, have a place in any major community. *The Thirty-Six Hour Day* ought to be in every community, perhaps in multiple copies, for with the graying of America, the number (not necessarily the percentage) of us afflicted with Alzheimer's disease will increase, and there will be few among us who do not have a community member, a parent, or other relative or friend with the disease. And surely, if we are in contact at all with people who come to us for help or advice, these will be among the problems raised.

A passage from the end of John's Gospel often occurs to me in dealing with seriously ill people; it has special poignancy when applied to the victims of Alzheimer's disease. "When you were young, you girded yourself and went where you would. When you are old, another will gird you and lead you where you would not." How beloved of the Lord must be the care givers of these poor people, and how deserving of any help we can offer.

—**Jon J. O'Brien, S.J., D.O.**